



PUPILS ARE SENT OUT OF BOROUGH

Report by Richard Guttridge

MORE than £1 million is being spent on sending pupils from Dudley to independent special schools – with most of them being sent outside the borough.

There were 52 pupils sent to the independent schools during 2014/15 with the places funded by Dudley Council. Almost three quarters of those pupils – 36 – are sent to schools outside of the borough.

Now Dudley Council has been criticised over a 'lack of planning' to ensure that there are an adequate number of places within the borough.

The total cost, from the education budget, is £1,008,010. In addition, £81,747 was spent on transport to get the children to the schools.

Education bosses at the council say that the needs of the children come first and that youngsters were only sent outside the borough when necessary.

But UKIP councillor Paul Brothwood said it was up to the council to be able to cater for special school pupils. He said: "We have lost a number of special schools in Dudley and it is now costing even more to send children outside of the borough, which is costly for the taxpayer. There has to be long-term planning."

Difficult

"It's difficult for parents with one child that needs to go to a special school and one that needs to go to a typical primary school, it means they have to make two journeys, and one outside of the borough."

Tony Oakman, strategic director for the people directorate at Dudley Council, said: "Out of borough placements provide highly specialist education for children who often have very complex needs."

"The placements are only agreed where absolutely necessary, to meet very challenging needs, and after every other option in borough has been exhausted."

"We monitor and review placements very closely and bring pupils back into the borough if appropriate. However, the needs of children will, and must, always be the top priority in deciding what educational provision is appropriate."

Councillor Brothwood said he was concerned about school places as a whole across Dudley with The Coseley School potentially facing closure and with hundreds of homes set to be built over the next decade. He said: "We are seeing schools close and lots of houses being built."

WINGS OF LOVE BEING CREATED FOR CHURCH



Black Country artist Luke Perry at work on the Angel wings memorial which will become a fixture at St Peter's Church in Cradley

VISITORS to a church in the Black Country will be brought a little closer to heaven when a new sculpture depicting angel wings is erected.

Artist Luke Perry was commissioned by St Peter's Church, Cradley, to craft the metal sculpture at his Cradley Heath workshop.

The art work will feature two seats and will be unveiled during a ceremony at the church next month.

Mr Perry said: "It is quite a dramatic new sculpture and will be uplifting. It is also a memorial piece and will feature next to the

church's cenotaph. I made it to look like real wings. It is based on British predator birds, like the kestrel. Some angel wings you see don't look realistic – but these do. The designs conform with the anatomy of wings, which is important to me."

He added: "The organisers at the church are doing a lot of work rejuvenating the area. There is a lot of planting going on at the memorial gardens. As part of that, they got in touch with me about the sculpture."

The £2,500 sculpture has taken Luke a month to craft. It involved beating sheets of

metal before welding them together. The steel was sourced from Netherton and the sculpture itself was made in Cradley Heath.

Luke said the wings will create a photo opportunity for visitors to the church, as they will come to shoulder height for people sitting on the seats.

St Peter's vicar Rev Kathryn Leclercz said: "I am absolutely thrilled with what I have seen so far. We wanted a sculpture that reflected the historic industry of the area. We are hoping it will also be a focal point for wedding photos too."

QUEEN

Rowley Hills beacon for royal birthday

THE Black Country will be joining communities up and down the country when it lights a special beacon to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday.

People will be able to see the beacon from miles around when it is lit at 8.30pm on April 21 on the Rowley Hills as Sandwell's official celebration. Sandwell Mayor Councillor Barbara Price will officially light the borough's beacon and the best view will be from the Oldbury area.

The Queen, with the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall, will light the first beacon at Windsor Castle.

ENVIRONMENT

Flowers brighten up area of town

AN area of Halesowen which has been blighted by crime and vandalism is being brightened up thanks to a flower planting campaign.

Shell Corner has been criticised for looking worn and run-down but efforts are now being made to change that. Flower seeds have been planted, meaning the area should look blooming lovely once the summer arrives.

Councillor Stuart Henley has been leading a campaign for improvements and says the planting project is 'a start'.

FOOTBALL

Drive to get blue plaque for Duncan

A FUNDRAISING drive is under way in order to get a plaque commemorating one of Dudley's most famous sons – Duncan Edwards.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin and Councillor Dave Tyler have teamed up to try to get a blue plaque installed in the town in memory of the Manchester United and England legend, who died from injuries sustained during the Munich air disaster in 1958.

Blue plaques, a scheme supported by English Heritage, celebrate the link between notable figures and the place where they lived.

INSIDE

EYES HAVE IT FOR WHEEL SUCCESS



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EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC:
Tel: John Sambrooks 01902 319431

ADVERTISING: Nicola Cope
Tel: 01902 319573
E-mail: nicola.cope@expressandstar.co.uk

PROPERTY: Marguerita Finnegan
Tel: 01902 319627
E-mail: marguerita.finnegan@expressandstar.co.uk

MOTORING: Liz Barratt
Tel: 01384 353244
E-mail: liz.barratt@expressandstar.co.uk

CLASSIFIED:
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Mayor visits tennis club to meet pair of ace coaches



Councillor Steve Waltho meets coaches Stacey Billingham (left) and Nikki Parkes

THE Mayor of Dudley served up a civic seal of approval when he popped into an 'ace' tennis club. Quarry Bank Tennis Club was highly commended at the Mayor's Ball and Civic Awards last week when it came third in the Duncan Edwards award for sport. Councillor Steve Waltho popped in to the club, off Talbots Lane, on Friday to present them with their certificate in recognition of their outstanding contribution to sport. He met coaches Nikki Parkes and Stacey Billingham, and youngsters at the Easter club.

Councillor Waltho said: "It's great to see the young tennis stars of the future being put through their paces and it's clear to see from the way the club is run why they were nominated for the Duncan Edwards award for sport. "Local sports clubs such as this help young people not only to learn new skills but to lead happy and healthy lifestyles too." Chairman Steve Jasper said: "We are very proud of the club being commended, it's a huge honour and great for everyone involved. It is a special moment for

Nikki and Stacey, who have been involved with the club since they were youngsters." The club, set up six years ago, currently has around 50 children and 50 adults taking part in sessions. The coaches were among three nominations for the Duncan Edwards award for sport at the Mayor's Civic Awards last month. The Mayor praised all three nominees before announcing winner Zara Jade Turton, who has represented GB in rhythm gymnastics.

Director of Albion new president at chamber

A SENIOR West Bromwich Albion director has taken over as head of the Black Country's biggest business organisation.

Adrian Wright is the Baggies' sales and marketing director and has taken on the role of president of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce after Kevin Rogers, boss of Wolverhampton firm Paycare, stepped down due to work commitments.

The 11th-hour change came as Mr Rogers was due to take over from the chamber's president for the last two years, Ninder Johal.

Mr Wright has more than doubled Albion's commercial income since his appointment in 2009 and has more recently been at the forefront of developing the club's links with the booming Indian football market.

Previously he was the head of corporate sales at Birmingham City Football Club from 2005 until 2010.

He said: "Obviously I am delighted by this opportunity, albeit my feelings are tinged with sadness. Kevin is a great leader and I was looking forward to working with him to deliver great results."

"The Black Country is a great place for business and I want to make sure that we navigate our way through the global headwinds and establish ourselves as the premier location worldwide for what we do best."

Kevin Rogers, chief executive of Paycare, has stepped down with "sincere regret".

Nomination for the Nobel Prize

A KIDNEY consultant from Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been nominated for the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, alongside colleagues from an international organisation set up to fight unethical organ transplants.

Consultant nephrologist Dr Adnan Sharif is secretary of Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH) - which campaigns globally against illegal and unethical transplant activity, especially in China where the majority of the ops occur.

The organisation's decade-long efforts to raise awareness of this issue have been recognised with a nomination for the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize. The winner will be announced in October ahead of the prestigious award ceremony in December.

Seven homes on former pub site

SEVEN homes will be built on the site of a former pub in Cradley.

The development has been earmarked for land on the corner of Intended Street and Hightown. The land has been empty since the Top Crown pub was demolished five years ago.

Inspectors tell care home it must improve

A NURSING home has been told it must improve its levels of safety and care.

In a report following an inspection by the Care Quality Commission, Woodview House Nursing Home was told its overall service 'required improvement'.

According to the report, medication was not being stored correctly, there were issues in communication and a failure to respond in a caring way.

The inspection at the home, in Hagley Road, Hayley Green, Halesowen, took place in February.

The report listed five key areas of its service that needed improving - safety, effectiveness, care, response and leadership.

Sean Tregonning, spokesman for Shaw Healthcare, which oversees the home, said: "We acknowledge that improvements are required and as the CQC report highlighted we are in the process of recruiting a new manager to implement our action plan."

Safety

The care home can care for up to 24 people with dementia and mental health problems.

The issues with safety was that medication records had not been accurately stored, meaning the care home could not 'ensure' the right medication was handed out.

There were also problems with communicating 'risks to people' which meant staff did not always have the right information to support people safely.

However the report also said staff knew 'the actions to take if they suspected someone was at risk of harm', and there were sufficient numbers of people on duty.

Covering the area of 'caring', the report requested that the care home improve.

It said staff did not always respond to distressed residents in a caring way. However staff could explain 'how to treat people with dignity.'

Residents and family members could express their views about the care, the report said, but it stated the service was not 'always responsive.'

The inspectors added there was a lack of meaningful activities available for residents, but complaints procedures were in place for people and relatives to voice their concerns.

Two escape injury as car hits barrier



The Nissan Micra came to rest on the metal railings after crashing through them on Hagley Road

A CAR slammed through a metal barrier in Halesowen town centre but its two passengers - a woman and a boy - amazingly escaped injury.

The blue Nissan Micra struck the railings on Hagley Road after coming off the Queensway island just before 8am last Wednesday.

The woman and a boy got out the vehicle before fire crews arrived.

The car's front tyres ended up perched on top of the barrier leaving it bent at an angle with scattered debris over the pavement.

Ten firefighters had rushed to the scene with engines from Woodgate Valley and Haden Cross.

The accident happened on the corner of a busy shopping area opposite the Asda superstore multi-storey car park.

Neil Spencer, West Midlands Fire Service spokesman, said: "We had a call at around 7.56am to attend a road traffic collision on Hagley Road. One woman and boy had got out of the car before we arrived

and were given a precautionary check over at the scene, but required no further treatment.

"We made sure that the vehicle and area surrounding it were made safe. The car was removed from the barrier using a winch."

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokeswoman added: "Two ambulances attended the scene. One woman was assisted at the scene for neck and back pain and a child was uninjured. Luckily they needed no further treatment."

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Libraries to be mutually run by own communities

DUDLEY Council has rubber-stamped 'historic' plans which will see the borough's libraries run by volunteers at board level.

These services will now be run as a not-for-profit 'mutual' as part of the authority's drive to save cash in the wake of Government cuts.

All libraries, library links and the archive service will remain open with the new combined service less reliant on council funding. That means a council saving of 11 per cent in 2016-17 rising to 30 per cent by 2017-18.

Councillors unanimously waved through the plans at a meeting on Monday.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said the mutual scheme marked 'a new era' for the borough.

She told the full council meeting: "This is an absolutely historic occasion for this council. It marks the end of a very long and hard journey.

"It's the start of a new journey and a new era which I'm positive will be a solution for keeping a vibrant libraries and archive services here in Dudley.

"This happens in the face of rapidly decreasing resources. We are becoming an exception in Dudley, as councils across the country are cutting back further and further."

The libraries and archives service will continue to be run by professional staff but have community, employee and council involvement at board level.

Rare Cup tickets on sale at auction

TWO rare Wolves and West Bromwich Albion FA Cup tickets are set to fetch more than £2,000 in total at auction.

A 1921 Wolves-Spurs FA Cup final ticket which cost five shillings new (25p in modern money) is expected to sell for between £700 and £1,000 at Graham Budd Auctions in London on April 26. An even rarer 1901 WBA-Spurs FA Cup semi-final ticket is set to fetch between £1,500 and £2,000 at the same auction.

That 1921 FA Cup final was the fifth of Wolves' eight FA Cup final appearances and it ended in a 1-0 win for the London club, who had also beaten Albion 4-0 at the FA Cup semi final at Villa Park on April 8, 1901. The Baggies have since made five FA Cup finals, winning three of them

Organ recital at St John's Church

DIRECTOR of Music at St John's Church in Halesowen, Mel Jones, will be giving an organ recital at the town centre church on Saturday, 10.15am. The concert is free with a collection. Refreshments will be served.

Badger sett delays anti-flooding project



Mousesweet Brook in Cradley

A LONG-awaited £1.4 million project to prevent a brook in the Black Country from flooding is facing further delays.

The project to strengthen and enlarge the Cradley Forge embankment on Mousesweet Brook in Cradley was first mooted in June 2014.

But a new council report warns the scheme is months behind schedule, with work not due to get under way until August.

Badger setts discovered on the site and work to protect a 'complex' sewer system have led to the hold-up.

Cradley historian Harry Bloomer said: "It has flooded very badly down there in the past. They used to have problems with water coming underneath the road and did a lot of excavation to build the culvert. It did used to get quite bad."

A report to a full council meeting states: "Design and construction technical difficulties have resulted in a substantial delay in commencing works, in particular the design and proposals for the complex temporary and permanent protection measures to the Severn Trent's two large str-

tegic foul sewers situated above the line of the proposed large watercourse culvert.

"Recent badger activity has been observed in a previously identified inactive sett close to the main culvert works area and as such additional monitoring and a works licence is required. Site preparation works were due to commence in February/March with the main works now commencing in August 2016. Spend is forecast to be within budget."

The brook runs through the Mousesweet Brook Local Nature Reserve.

Find the cowards who broke our mum's arm

'IT'S devastating. It's heartbreaking.'

These are the words of sisters whose 78-year-old mother thought she was going to be killed by robbers who pinned her down in her own home.

Joyce Bennett suffered a fractured arm in the ordeal, which saw three men force their way into her Halesowen property.

One raider put a gloved hand over the terrified grandmother's mouth and held her down as the other robbers rifled through cupboards.

The terrified pensioner's attackers got away with her handbag and purse, which contained a small amount of cash.

The robbery, which happened at 9pm on Wednesday, in Springfield Drive, bears striking similarities to an attack in West Bromwich at the end of March. Police said they were not ruling out the possibility of the two being linked.

Plea

Mrs Bennett's daughters have now made a plea for anyone who has information about the attackers to come forward.

Claire Roberts, 46, received a call from her distraught mother seconds after the attackers had fled.

"She said she had been burgled and that she thought she had broken her shoulder," Mrs Roberts said. "I just put the phone down and went."

She arrived to find her mother being treated by paramedics.

Mrs Bennett's other daughter Helen Neville, 49, said it was heartbreaking to think of how scared her mother had been. She said: "She remembers three men coming in and being pushed to the ground. One put a gloved hand over her face. She did say she thought they were going to kill her. She thought he had something in his hand, a weapon"

The pensioner, who spent most of her working life as a carer, is now recovering.

Mrs Neville said: "It's devastating. It's heart-breaking to see your mum hurt and and frightened. I feel really sad about mum and the impact it has had on her. I am angry about what has happened. No-one should be made to feel vulnerable in their own home. She is normally very independent."

She added: "I would ask anybody who thinks they have seen anything or knows anything that could help please to come forward and make contact. I just want for mum to see these people brought to justice for what they did to her."

Detectives are trawling CCTV to try and identify the men, who are believed to be in their 20s with local accents. Anyone with information should call police on 101.



Joyce Bennett, aged 78, was attacked in her own home by robbers who got away with a small amount of cash



Helen Neville, left, and Claire Roberts appeal for information about the thugs who attacked their mother

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wear a onesie for big cat fundraiser

FUNDRAISERS are being invited to don their onesies to help one of the world's most endangered big cats.

This year's Onesie Walk at Dudley Zoo is on May 7. Money raised will go towards extending the closure for the attraction's trio of snow leopards - Makalu, Nanga and Margaash - with new viewing area and platform.

The event at the 40-acre site is open to all ages and offers participants a chance to see their favourite animals on the 5 kilometre route. Participants are asked to raise at least £50 sponsorship. Call 0844 474 2272.

Street lights to be more efficient

MORE than 700 of the most inefficient lights on main roads in Dudley borough are to be replaced after the council was handed £30,000 of Government cash.

The £29, 997 pot will help upgrade 714 main road lights.

Once complete, the project will reduce peak demand by 100kw, the equivalent of around 800 kettles continuously boiling.

The project, which starts this month, will result in annual electricity savings of around £65,000 for the local authority.

Centre all set to leap into action

PLANS to build a trampoline centre in an Oldbury warehouse got the final go-ahead, creating 25 jobs, at a meeting yesterday (Wednesday).

The project from Flip Out at Churchbridge was backed but needed Sandwell councillors to rubber-stamp it, as it departs from a local development plan. A report recommended 'an exception to the Black Country Joint Core Strategy and local development plan be allowed' for the scheme including a cafe and seating area.

Teams face football pitch fee price hike

PLANS to increase football pitch fees for scores of teams across the Dudley borough have been rubber-stamped.

This is despite a report last year claiming almost half of the pitches were in a poor condition.

Under new fee, the cost to hire a pitch and changing rooms next season will increase from £518 to £527.90.

Costs to hire facilities on a casual basis will be £50.49 per match, up from £49.50. Fees for junior football teams will rise from £182.90 to £186.56.

Action on left vehicle

WARDENS at Sandwell Council have continued their crackdown on the borough's roads by removing another untaxed vehicle.

The vehicle was targeted in Power Way, Tipton, last week under the council's scheme to tackle abandoned vehicles.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



THEY say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but theft comes a pretty close second. I have shamelessly nicked the following from a reader's email because I can't improve upon it: "MPs fiddle expenses, rich avoid tax, unemployed fiddle benefits, traders fiddle VAT and tax, government fiddles statistics. It's what the Prime Minister refers to as all being in it together."

I WAS impressed, too, with an economical little note on my recent item about Enid Blyton's Famous Five. A reader writes: "Richmal could write Enid off the page." Can't argue with that. Richmal Crompton, creator of Just William, was for my money one of the best children's authors of all time. Better than Blyton. Better than Rowling.

THANKS for your tips on how to de-criminalise the Tom Jones hit, Delilah. As you may recall, the song is causing concern among folk who think it encourages violence



with the line: "I felt the knife in my hand and she laughed no more." We need a non-lethal object in the hand. A reader points out that the singer John Otway has already recorded a version with "I felt the spoon in my hand." Other readers have suggested that stopping Delilah laughing could be achieved with a pair of socks, the TV remote control or an Aston Villa season ticket. Good to see you're all taking it so seriously.

"BETRAYAL of White Pupils" was the thunderous tabloid headline on the latest figures showing poor white kids trailing in educational achievement. The implication was that there is some vast conspiracy against white kids. Bunkum. By and large, kids do well at school if they come from families, cultures and communities which cherish education and recognise the importance of discipline and homework. Some children may well be betrayed. But how many of them are betrayed not by the schools but by the attitudes and values of their own families? Little Jimmy don't need no edukashun 'cos he's gonna play for Arsenal, innit?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Refugee is jailed after frauds totalling £28k

A POLITICAL refugee whose bank account was used to launder thousands of pounds obtained in frauds has been jailed for two years.

Toure Moussa of Durham Road, Rowley Regis, had denied three charges of converting criminal property, but was found guilty following a trial.

Loans were obtained from an online lender specialising in small business loans for £6,300 and £5,700 with the money being paid into a nominated account, which was Moussa's bank account. "The fraud was quite sophisticated in nature, supported by copies of passports and energy bills," said Adam Western, prosecuting.

Loans company Ezob only suspected something was wrong when no repayments were made on the two loans, so contacted police who were able to trace the account to 32-year-old Moussa.

The other victim was a customer of online estate agents Chesterton's, who received an emailed invoice from the company requesting a payment of £16,309. That was followed up by a second email, purporting to be from the company, requesting that the payment be made into a different account.

When Chesterton's chased up the payment and were told it had been paid into that other account, they contacted the police who again traced the account to Moussa. When he was arrested Moussa denied having any involvement in the frauds, claiming he had simply allowed another man to use his bank account, not realising dishonesty was involved.

By Rob Cox

Colin McCarraher, defending, said: "This is a 32-year-old man, the father of two children, aged seven and five, who both reside in Guinea Bissau where they are being looked after by his partner. He does his best to send money back to them from his £250-a-week job sorting parcels."

Jailing Moussa at Coventry Crown Court, Judge Philip Gregory told him: "You played an active and extremely important role in a sophisticated fraud that went on for a number of months. A bank was cheated out of £12,000 which passed through your account. "More seriously, an innocent individual was defrauded out of over £16,000."

Memorial service for leader



Councillor Darren Cooper – a celebration of his life

A CIVIC memorial event to celebrate the life and achievements of Sandwell Council Leader Councillor Darren Cooper will be held at West Bromwich Town Hall next Friday, April 22.

Councillor Cooper, who led the council since 2009, died suddenly over the Easter weekend.

His family, friends, colleagues and representatives from organisations who worked closely with him will be invited to the event by the council.

Announcing the event, acting Council Leader Councillor Steve Eling said: "I've been overwhelmed by people's kind words since we lost Darren."

Condolence

"He was so well thought of by people from all walks of life."

"Hundreds of people have already signed the books of condolence in Oldbury and Smethwick, and we will be sharing these heartfelt messages with Darren's family."

"This event will be an opportunity to celebrate Darren's life and remember the huge contribution he made to Sandwell, the Black Country and to the wider West Midlands."

Bosses are 'confident' on birth services

SANDWELL health bosses say they are 'confident' their maternity services could take dozens of extra births to ease pressure on Walsall's Manor Hospital.

It was revealed last week that up to 200 expectant mothers a year are set to be told they cannot have their babies delivered at the Manor. Instead, they will be redirected to services in Sandwell and Dudley.

Elaine Newell, director of midwifery for Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "We have been talking to Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust for some time and are pleased to be able to support the Trust in offering access to our maternity service for women from the Walsall area, or parts of Sandwell who historically look to the Manor."

"We are very confident that we have the right capacity to continue to provide our high standards of care in our midwifery services and birthing facilities."

It has not yet been confirmed how mothers will be divided between Sandwell's Midwifery Unit or Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital.

Paul Clark, chief executive for Dudley Group NHS Foundation Group, said: "We can confirm the Trust has been in discussion with Walsall CCG and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust regarding maternity provision. These discussions are still in the early stages."

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Courthouse to be flattened to make way for 30 new flats

A FORMER court building in Halesowen will be demolished to make way for a three-storey apartment block under plans.

The old magistrates court at the junction of Queensway and Laurel Lane has been empty since it closed five years ago and has been up for sale.

Now Ruskin Properties has unveiled plans to flatten it and create a housing block in its place. A total of 30 two-bedroom flats would be created with 42 parking spaces to be provided.

Borough joins in with 90th celebrations

SANDWELL is joining hundreds of communities up and down the country when it lights a special beacon to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday.

People will be able to see the beacon from miles around when it is lit at 8.30pm on April 21.

Sandwell Mayor Councillor Barbara Price will officially light the borough's beacon on the Rowley Hills, near East Avenue. The best view of the beacon will be from the Oldbury area.

The Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall will light the principal beacon at Windsor Castle.

It will be followed by the lighting of more than 1,000 beacons throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, UK overseas Territories and Commonwealth to celebrate the Queen's landmark. Beacons have previously been lit for The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

Developers have promised a 'stylish, modern development' to replace the 1970s court building opposite a multi-storey car park.

The plans have been lodged with Dudley Council with a decision expected to be made in the next few weeks.

A statement submitted with the plans said: "The proposed development would make a positive contribution to local character and the distinctiveness of the area. The proposals would result in a high quality residential development that would compliment and enhance the character and quality of the area within which it stands."

Axed

Halesowen Magistrates Court closed in 2011 with the loss of around 70 jobs after being among several court buildings across the Midlands which were axed as part of Government cuts.

Halesowen councillor Hilary Bills said she was pleased the site was finally going to be used again.

She said: "Once the decision was made to close the court, housing was the only option left for that piece of land. We would have liked to have kept our court and police station and everything else we have lost in Halesowen but it's an empty building and it isn't going to be used again."

Stylish Peaky Blinders back with bang



Cillian Murphy, centre, returns as Tommy Shelby to lead an all star Peaky Blinders cast in the Brummie gangster epic

THE Shelby family are back and looking smarter than ever as the cast of hit TV show Peaky Blinders.

A sneaky peak of new series, which was partly filmed at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley, will take place in Birmingham on May 4.

The cast will be at The Everyman Cinema in the Mailbox for a special screening of the first new episode. The red carpet event will include actors Cillian

Murphy, Paul Anderson and Packy Lee. Actor Sam Neill will not be playing Major Campbell in series three after Aunt Polly (Helen McCrory) killed him off.

They will be joined by the show's producers and Birmingham-born and writer and creator, Steven Knight, who will arrive at the screening in 'spectacular Peaky Blinders fashion', according to the BBC. The hit-show is due to return in May and sees Hollywood heart-

throb Tom Hardy reprise his role of Alfie Solomons. Joe Godwin, director of BBC Birmingham, said: "This event is going to be a real moment for the whole city to enjoy."

Fans are encouraged to dress in Peaky Blinders' style costumes with flat caps and 1920s attire.

Details of how to register for tickets to the special screening will be coming soon.

Sick day figures criticised

HOSPITAL bosses in Sandwell have warned the level of staff sickness absence is 'unacceptably high' and putting added pressure on finances.

A report for Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust's board sets out the rolling 12-month level of sickness absence as 4.99 per cent, nearly 1.5 per cent higher than the goal of 3.5 per cent.

This is impacting on the already stretched Trust finances, as bosses had planned to cut sickness absence in order to make £923,000 worth of savings between 2016-18.

Back in September, the Trust announced new 'punitive measures both for managers and employees' to try to tackle the level of sickness absence. But the rolling 12-month rate has actually risen since then, from 4.91 per cent to the current 4.99 per cent.

Councillor Bob Lloyd, who sits on Sandwell Council's health board, said the situation was 'almost an unsolvable conundrum'.

Music and mirth on bill for show

BROADCASTER and performer Billy Spakemon will present an evening of Black Country entertainment in Wolverhampton this month.

The evening of poetry, music and storytelling is on April 30 from 7.30pm at the Arena Theatre. Kim Lowings and the Greenwood, The Langford Band and The Boonys are among those to feature. Tickets are £10 and £8 concessions. Visit www.wlv.ticketssolve.com

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Scotsman is still just the ticket for rail fans

WHEN tickets went on sale to travel on a train pulled by the newly-restored Flying Scotsman at the Severn Valley Railway, the website crashed within minutes. Hours later, the website continued to have problems, as people clamoured for the 7,000 tickets released.

It's not really surprising. Flying Scotsman was a milestone in engineering, the first railway engine officially recorded as travelling at 100mph.

And all this was in 1934, when transport for many people was still a horse and cart.

But these were the days when innovation meant exciting new developments where the aim was to make everything faster, bigger, more powerful.

Do you think, 80 years from now, people will feel the same sense of nostalgia and affection for the iPhone or contactless payment? We've lost our imagination.

Oh, and one other thing. The Severn Valley Railway shows us that the old technology is considerably more dependable than the new stuff.

DO you remember James Billington, the comedian who caused a minor diplomatic spat by pretending to be the Mayor of Stafford?

Well, he's resurfaced again, and this time the joke is asking people to give him £1,000 to meet his bogus Russian bride.

Look, I know I'm a traditionalist, but didn't you prefer the days when comedians just told jokes?

MAYBE I should be angrier, but I really can't get very excited about the Prime Minister's historic offshore holdings. He once had £30,000 worth of shares in his father's company, which he sold six years ago, and paid the same amount of tax as he would have done anyway. If that's all there is to it, I think we're barking up the wrong tree.

Then again, perhaps it's because I participate in tax avoidance too. Like many of you, I have got some ISAs, which I do for the express reason of paying less tax. And why not?

We pay income tax and national insurance when we earn money, we pay VAT when we spend it, not to mention the plethora of so-called green taxes we have forced on us.

It is really fair that if we put something away for a rainy day, so we will hopefully become less dependent on the state in years to come, that we should be clobbered for that as well?

Particularly given that last week the Government revealed it would be spending £9 million on propaganda about the EU referendum, carefully timed to fall outside of the "purdah" period, when such use of funds would be outlawed.

Now that is what we should be bashing Cameron for.



Right direction – Dudley Market trader Javad Hussain



Veronica Corfield and Andrea Hubball in the town centre



Grace Wyld, 21 from Halesowen, with new public art in Dudley

Eyes have it as the wheel proves a hit

Piers Morgan sneered but the smiles of Dudley folk prove view of town is far from grim, **DAVID CALLAGHAN** reports

SINCE the arrival of an 114ft Ferris Wheel to the centre of Dudley, the town has been cast into the national spotlight.

The attraction – called the DY Eye – has been criticised and dubbed ‘the worst tourist attraction in Britain’ after outspoken TV presenter Piers Morgan also waded in to declare he could think of ‘no grimmer panorama than Dudley’.

But the attraction has proved so popular that it will remain open for an extra two weeks due to public demand.

The largest ever wheel to grace the Black Country made national news last month after Good Morning Britain host Morgan branded the DY Eye the worst tourist attraction in Britain.

But the controversial comments have proved great publicity the attraction, as the wheel aims to hit 10,000 visitors this weekend.

The 35 metre high giant observation wheel in Stone Street Square will now remain open for business until 6pm on Sunday, April 24.

Managing Director of Dudley Market Traders Association Len Lenihan said: “It’s brilliant news, it just shows how successful the wheel has been.

“We are delighted people have reacted so positively towards as we have worked hard to achieve this enterprise and keep it going.

“It’s the first time we have had an attraction of this size in the Black Country and it looks to have paid off.”

The news means the wheel will be in Dudley to mark the town’s St George’s Day celebrations on April 23.

Alan Lunt, strategic director at Dudley Council, said: “We’re delighted the wheel is staying for an extra two weeks and we hope businesses will continue to enjoy the benefits of a nationally renowned tourist attraction in



Wheely great – students and sisters Shantelle and Shardae McDonald love their home town

the heart of the town. We have been so pleased with the feedback from people who have ridden on the DY Eye and it is a fantastic boost to our ongoing work to promote Dudley as a great place to visit.

“If people haven’t had the chance to ride the wheel yet, there’s still time.”

Proud Dudley residents and workers have sprung to their town’s defence after the London-based media decided to scoff at the town’s attraction.

Javad Hussein, aged 29, who has been working on Dudley Market for 12 years, said: “The national stories about the wheel have been twisted around. It’s not a fair representation of Dudley at all. Working for so many years on the markets, I’ve seen the changes that have been made here. It’s been a very up and down process but everyone is trying to work in the right direction.

“What Dudley needs is mass investment, more shops need to be opened to attract more people so they can see what we can offer, but it’s unfair to see the criticism we’ve had as a town.”

Offer

Veronica Corfield, aged 70, from Coseley, said: “I come to Dudley at least three times a week, it caters for all my needs.

“It’s got a lot to offer – Wrens Nest is a geological site, we have the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley Zoo, a brand new college campus.

“People still come from far and wide and I can think of worse places to go. People only want to focus on the negatives of the town when in fact there are a lot of positives.”

Andrea Hubball, aged 59, of Wrens Nest, said: “When has Piers Morgan ever said any-

thing positive about anywhere or anyone? He gets paid to criticise.

“I’m proud to have lived and been brought up here, other people should be as well.”

Shops have benefitted from the introduction of the wheel with Arcade Toy Shop manager Dave Carter, aged 47 from Gornal, saying he has experienced an increase in trade.

“Our footfall has increased by 30 per cent, and we’ve seen sales rise by more than 25 per cent,” he said.

“We’ve had all kinds of people visiting the wheel and then coming into the shop.

“People knock Dudley, as it seems to be an easy target, but I think this is very unfair as we have plenty of heritage here.

“The wheel has views of the castle and surrounding areas, plus it’s a bit of fun for the family.

“The people of the town really did take objection to Piers Morgan’s comments about Dudley being dreary and dull, and he should take a ride and see for himself.”

Sisters Shantelle and Shardae McDonald, aged 21 and 22, were in town visiting family and decided to take a trip on the wheel.

Shantelle, who studies at London’s Kingston University, said: “At least it is trying to bring people into the town and be proactive, so the wheel is definitely trying to help the town for the right reasons.”

Shardae, who attends Manchester’s Metropolitan University, added: “It is a shame that when anything positive tries to happen in the town, it seems to be disregarded before it’s even given a chance.

“We are proud to have been educated and brought up here.”

Grace Wyld, aged 21 from Haden Hill, was visiting the town for the first time in over a year and was impressed by what she saw.

She said: “It’s changed a lot since I was last here, and for the better. The market looks really good and the Coronation Gardens look beautiful.”

Council leader Pete Lowe has branded Mr Morgan’s claims as ‘absolute nonsense’ and believes the view from he wheel shows the regeneration of the town.

Last week dozens rode the wheel wearing Piers Morgan masks in a dig at the presenter.

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Losing sight of good education values

IT is small wonder that morale is low in teachers (and doctors) when the Government continues to jack-boot its policies through, disregarding the views and opinions of the relevant experts.

Look what is happening to the junior doctors having new employment contracts forced upon them. We are supposed to be living in a democracy – this Government is becoming more like a dictatorship.

Forcing all schools to become academies is in my opinion unbelievably misguided, inappropriate and potentially

dangerous. Academies were introduced by Labour to improve education in areas of deprivation, particularly inner city schools – a laudable ambition. But in order to succeed a lot of money was thrown at the pilot schemes, and guess what, they had good results.

But fast forward. That extra funding didn't continue and we are becoming aware of the fact that some of the academies are failing.

The Government wants to be rid of all local education authorities, but what will also be lost will be guidance, checks and balances and accountabil-

ity. Academies will be far more autonomous, but it is my understanding that they are not directly accountable to the community they serve. They are more driven by financial considerations, targets, exam results and league tables.

Teachers' professionalism is being eroded and undervalued by the government. I feel we are losing sight of the values of good education and that is the trade-off for schools becoming exam factories and that academies will also to the decline.

A FERRIER
Kinver

Steel not a new issue

HERE we are again with the blame game over loss of jobs in the steel industry.

Why didn't Labour put in place contingency plans when they were in power? The problem is not new.

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How long have we got to put up with these politicians and their empty promises?

B LAWLEY
Bilston

Upkeep is a real burden

I AM gratified that Ian Austin is supporting a clean-up of All Saints Cemetery at Sedgley. I have parents and relatives buried there and have long regretted its overgrown state. Its upkeep is a real burden.

As a footnote imagine my surprise to see Mr Austin at a partly collapsed grave next to my parents' which I tidied at Christmas.

A DRING
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Any more ways to destroy industry?

I CAN'T think of any other ways the Tories might find to destroy our heavy production industries. If you were to put your mind to the elimination of companies employing vast numbers of people, e.g. cement, aluminium and steel, I doubt if you could come up with many more plays than this Tory government has.

1: It goes ahead with so-called clean energy projects which then produce some of the most costly energy in the world whilst putting our energy requirements at risk by closing coal fired stations which produce cheaper energy; 2: It adds green taxes in line with lunatic promises to make UK the most green and pleasant land; 3: It connives to stop the EU putting up tariff barriers against Chinese steel which by every economic measure is being dumped on world markets often at below cost of production; 4: It pithers around for years and claims it has been working tirelessly to prevent the current chaos; 5: It kowtows to China, which then puts up tariffs on imported steel.

When I look at this and at Osborne's flaccid attempts to balance the books and rebalance the economy, I'm beginning to think that the Tories are as useless as Labour.

A M ETHERIDGE
Dudley

So hard to see doctor

ON March 30, my husband made an appointment to see our local GP. The first available date was April 11.

Why should it be so difficult to get an appointment? We have had the same local doctor for over 30 years and we were always able to see him the same or next day.

The practice now has three doctors, so could it be that they are just taking on more patients than they can adequately cope with?

DUDLEY RESIDENT

PM made a promise

WHEN Mr Cameron was elected as Prime Minister he promised to listen to the people, instead he is imposing a contract on junior doctors against their will. He has failed to hear the cries of British steel workers suffering from a trade deal with China that is destroying our steel industry. Now he intends to impose academy status on all schools.

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Wall Heath

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Inside the old Savoy picturehouse in Stourbridge



The building as it looks now in Lower High Street



A care home is among the uses suggested for the former cinema



The cinema as it looked in 1920

Reel interest expected in old cinema building

AN iconic former cinema in Stourbridge has been put on the rental market just over a month after it was snapped up for £350,000.

The old Savoy Cinema in Lower High Street is up for rent on the Rightmove property website.

The property, which contains a series of interlinked buildings, was sold for £350,000 by estate agents Walton and Hipkiss back in February.

Now the new owner has put it up for rent, but also offered the option for people to snap the place up for £600,000.

Rental options for the 16,000sq ft building are for £5,333 per month or a total of £64,000 per year according to the online advert. A statement on the property's Rightmove page sets out the opportunities for investors.

This reads: "The property comprises a substantial premises that was formerly used as a cinema before being converted into a three-storey premises

MEMORY LANE

By David Cosgrove

and more recently used as a supermarket, nightclub and gym.

"Alternatively consideration will be given to the sale of the property with offers in the region of £600,000 sought for the freehold interest, subject to contract."

When it was previously sold, plans to develop the site into a care home or retirement complex were put forward.

The new owner was said to be in discussions with several 'interested parties' about the future of the site.

The historic building has not been used as a cinema for more than three decades and in recent years attracted controversy when it was a lap-dancing club.

It has also been used for retail purposes and most recently was a health and fitness club.

Groups wanting to reopen the Savoy as a cinema had shown interest but it

is now thought unlikely that will happen. The Savoy closed as a cinema in 1982 after more than 60 years as a picture-house, originally called the Scala. The Savoy closed as a cinema in 1982.

Its change to a lap-dancing club called Heaven attracted criticism from local politicians, while an investigation was launched after claims it breached its licence were made in a Channel 4 documentary.

The advert on Rightmove also hints there are development possibilities for the site, with the suggestion that it could be open for 'alternative uses'. A statement says anyone hoping to refurbish the historic building should speak with council planners.

The web advert states: "The property may be suitable for alternative uses and interested parties are advised to speak to Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's planning department."

The former cinema is one of a number of historic buildings in the town, sitting across the road from King Edward VI College and just down from The Mitre pub.



A poster for the Savoy dating back to the 1940s

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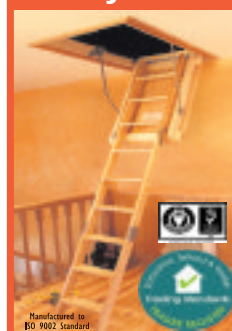


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Yamlet – to be or not to be, ay it the question?

ONE of William Shakespeare's most famous tragedies is being translated into the Black Country dialect.

The move comes as part of a project that aims to celebrate and preserve the distinctive language of the region.

Yamlet will see the Prince of Denmark story's characters perform translated excerpts in locations around Cradley Heath.

The title character will be portrayed by an aspiring actor from Stourbridge. Birmingham School of Acting post-graduate student Stuart Ash will be filmed on location in period Elizabethan costume and his performances will be broadcast throughout April on Facebook, Twitter and, of course, 'YowTube' and 'InstaYam'.

Mr Ash, an MA acting student at Birmingham City University, said: "It's a fantastic project for me to be working on and something that's very close to my heart."

Phrases

"I'm really proud of my Stourbridge roots, and playing Yamlet will be a great opportunity for me to tap in to that side of me as an actor. I've picked up a few words and phrases from the script that I'd never heard before."

"It'll be really interesting to see what people who are from the Black Country – and people who aren't – will make of it."

Yamlet has been devised by Philip Holyman and Gareth Nicholls, co-directors of Walsall-based theatre company Little Earthquake.

The pair are also both visiting lecturers at the Birmingham School of Acting, part of Birmingham City University.

The work has partly been inspired by the upcoming 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, on April 23.



Stuart Ash as Yamlet, which is being performed across the Black Country

Mr Holyman said: "With a ruff round his neck and a fake skull in his hand, Yamlet will celebrate Black Country cultural identity by capturing fragments of language which are in danger of being lost forever."

Yamlet was commissioned as part of the 'Where's Our Spake Gone?' project, supported by £77,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Since 2014, a team of linguists, historians and artists has been working alongside residents to explore ways to record and celebrate the distinctive dialect and language of the Black Country.

Their efforts have focused in particular on four areas – Cradley Heath, Gornal, Oldbury and Tipton – each of which host public events featuring performances and exhibitions.

The project will generate an archive of oral history interviews, as well as photographic essays and short films, workshops, a commemorative book with accompanying DVD and several new artist commissions, including 'Yamlet'.

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Woman fears for her life after yobs target home

A WOMAN who lives in the former home of a convicted paedophile is fearing for her life after yobs hurled a brick through the window of her Black Country house.

Hazel Denham, aged 77, of Clent Road, Oldbury, has lived in her home for the last 18 months, but has been the victim of vile and vicious attacks, with the most recent happening on Friday April 1, when a brick was thrown through her front window.

Before she had chance to see who had done it, the perpetrators had fled the scene. They have previously vandalised the front of her house with written abuse, and neighbours along with police have helped to clean it up.

But Mrs Denham believes she is being targeted because of who she says was the home's previous occupant, Harold Branson, who was jailed in January 2007 after being convicted of indecently assaulting three girls nearly 30 years ago.

Disqualified

He was jailed for nine years and sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court for 12 charges of indecent assault and two charges of indecency with a child. He was disqualified from working with children for life and told he would have to notify police of his whereabouts upon his release.

The offences took place between 1983 and 1991 when one of the victims was just five years old. The court heard how Branson had brainwashed his victims into keeping it 'his little secret'. However, years later the youngest of the victims, now in her thirties, decided to speak up and was supported by two other victims, now in their thirties.

Mrs Denham, originally from Bir-



Hazel Denham, aged 77, who had her Clent Road address in Oldbury targeted

mingham, moved from Skegness to the area to be closer to a friend. She said: "I'm an elderly woman who has done nothing to no-one."

"I'm petrified in my house and scared to leave it. Luckily, I wasn't in the front room on Friday, otherwise I could have been killed. The police have told me they can't do anything but I don't understand how this can be the case considering how many times I've called them out."

"I've been told the house was targeted when the previous owner lived

here, but people need to realise there is no connection between us whatsoever and this needs to stop. How can anyone abuse and treat an elderly woman in this way?"

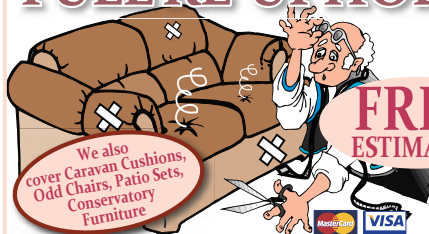
Sergeant Jamie Needle, of the local policing team, said: "We are aware of the ongoing concerns around this address and local officers continue to work with the householder and community. Inquiries remain ongoing into the motive for the offences." Anyone with information about the incident on Friday is asked to call police on 101.

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Tues. 26 Apr 19.00-20.30 1 wk. **FREE**

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Inters: Mon. 18 Apr. 19.00-21.00. 10 wks. £67.00#
Advanced: Thurs 21 Apr. 19.00-21.00. 11 wks. £73.70#

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NEW Beg: Mon 9 May. 15.30-17.00. 8 wks. £43.20#
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Wed.19.00-20.00, Sun. 9.00-10.00. £4.50

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Beg.@ Oakfield: Fri 22 Apr. 10.00-11.00. 12 wks. £48.00#

Improvers: Tues 19 Apr. 19.00-20.00. 12 wks. £43.20

Improvers: Wed 20 Apr. 18.30-19.30. 12 wks. £43.20

Improvers: Thurs 21 Apr. 19.05-20.05. 12 wks. £43.20

Improvers: Thurs 21 Apr. 20.10-21.10. 12 wks. £43.20

FITNESS YOGA

Tues 19 Apr. 20.05-21.05. 12 wks. £43.20

ADULT SWIMMING LESSONS:

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Improvers: Mon. 18 Apr 19.45-20.30. 11 wks. £34.65#

Inter/Adv Mon. 18 Apr 20.30-21.15. 11 wks. £34.65#

MUSIC

PLAY THE GUITAR

Intermediates: Mon. 18 Apr. 19.00-21.00 10 wks. £67.00#

Beginners: Tues. 3 May 19.00-20.30 10 wks. £54.00#

Improvers: Thurs. 21 Apr. 19.00-20.30 11 wks. £59.40#

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Beginners (2) Mon 18 Apr 17.45-18.45 5 wks. £45.75

Beginners (1) Mon 6 June 16.45-17.45 6 wks. £54.90

Beginners (2) Mon 6 June 17.45-18.45 6 wks. £54.90

Improvers Thurs 21 Apr 17.45-18.45 6 wks. £54.90

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DANCE FIT

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Tues 7 June. 19.00-21.00. 4 wks. £28.80#

Tues 7 June. 9.30-11.30. 4 wks. £28.80#

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Tues 7 June 09.30-11.30 4 wks. £28.80#

AN INTRODUCTION TO IPAD

Tues 26 Apr 09.30-11.30 1 wk. £7.20#

Tues 7 June 09.30-11.30 1 wk. £7.20#

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Tues 14 June 09.30-11.30 1 wk. £7.20#

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HOW TO USE AN OVERLOCKER

Mon 6 June. 19.00-21.00. 3 wks. £41.30

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Elections dubbed pivotal for solving cash crisis

A GOVERNMENT minister says upcoming council elections are a 'pivotal moment' in taking Dudley out of a 'financial black hole'.

Marcus Jones MP, Minister for Local Government, visited the borough to launch the Conservative's local election campaign.

Mr Jones spoke of his hopes for the area to be transformed if the Conservatives were to take the reins of Dudley Council and talked about his time working in Cradley Heath.

He said: "It is fantastic to be here in Dudley. I wanted to come along and help out on the campaign launch and chat with local people."

"We want to make sure services people need are projected the most. It is really important Dudley is protecting local businesses."

"It is a pivotal moment here in Dudley to transform services, busi-

nesses and get them out of the financial black hole they have been left in.

"I used to work in Cradley Heath at Berry King many years ago and travelled around with the company, so it is always good to be back here."

Mr Jones, MP for Nuneaton and the surrounding villages of Anasley, New Arley, Old Arley, Hartshill and Furnace End, later took to the streets of Wordsley along with Dudley South team to speak to the community.

Les Jones, a candidate for the post of Police & Crime Commissioner later spoke about his plans for the town during the campaign launch.

He said: "We have seen thousands of police officers cut over the course of the year, which has been unacceptable."

"The PCC is important to the local government."



Marcus Jones MP, right, with Dudley Council Conservative group leader Councillor Patrick Harley

Shortlist of three to run region's trains

THREE train operators have been shortlisted to run the region's trains from 2017 onwards.

London and West Midlands Railway Limited, West Midlands Trains Limited and Mitsui & Co Ltd have been shortlisted for the new contracts. The companies will now compete to run the new franchise, which also marks the start of a new era that will see operators handed responsibility to run services locally.

London Midland currently operates the franchise but contracts are expected to be awarded in June next year with services under the new system rolling out from the October.

West Midlands Rail Ltd, the company set up by local authorities to improve passenger services, has welcomed the shortlist. Programme director Malcolm Holmes said: "We look forward to working with the Department for Transport and the three bidders in shaping our local rail services for the forthcoming franchise. The successful train operator will be working in an exciting new environment where the West Midlands will have real influence and responsibility over its local services."

Statue call by MP to honour war hero's life

A DUDLEY MP has called for a statue to commemorate the life of the Black Country war hero who became known as the 'British Schindler'.

Major Frank Foley risked his life on numerous occasions to save tens of thousands of Jews from German concentration camps in the 1930s.

Now, Ian Austin is set to push for a statue of Major Foley to take pride of place in his home town of Stourbridge.

The Dudley North MP said: "We now have a memorial tree and plaque in Mary Stevens Park, but I would like to see a statue to Frank Foley so that people from right across the Black Country can come and learn about him and our country's role in fighting for freedom, democracy and tolerance against Nazi Germany."

Mr Austin is preparing to host an event in Westminster on April 20 to celebrate Major Foley's life. It will feature a talk by Michael Smith, the author of Frank Foley: The Spy Who Saved Ten Thousand Jews.



Major Frank Foley

in Dudley recognises and celebrates. I'm holding this event in Parliament to celebrate his life and push for a more permanent memorial to Major Foley's achievements."

Major Foley was a British intelligence officer who worked undercover as a passport control officer in pre-war Berlin.

At great personal risk, he saved thousands of Jews from certain death, forging documents so they could escape from Nazi Germany and hiding up to three or four of them in his own house at any one time.

Major Foley, who died in 1958, was posthumously accorded the status Righteous Amongst the Nations in 1999 and British Hero of the Holocaust in 2010.

A plaque was erected in his honour at the British Embassy in Berlin in 2004.

A statue of Major Foley already exists in the town of his birth, Highbridge in Somerset. Last year a tree and plaque were unveiled in Mary Stevens Park.

Unique

The 1999 book brought his hitherto secret but extraordinary achievements to the public's attention.

Mr Austin said: "When other European countries were sending Jews to concentration camps, Britain provided a safe haven for tens of thousands of refugees."

"I think this period defines what it means to be British - our unique response to the Holocaust and role in the war gives us the right to claim a particular attached to the values of democracy, equality, freedom, fairness and tolerance."

"Frank Foley embodies these values. His refusal to stand by when people were being singled out because of their race and religion marks him out as a true local hero, and his name should be one that everyone

Waste plant plan off

PLANS to build a massive waste treatment plant on a 10-acre site in Kingswinford will not be going ahead after the scheme was withdrawn. Proposals for the plant off Oak Lane would have seen recycled brick, concrete, tiles, road and demolition waste reused and sold back to the construction industry. The proposal was put forward by S & R Construction Ltd, of Brierley Hill, but has now withdrawn it.

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Striking doctors: We feel backed into a corner



Striking junior doctors join the picket line at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley

"WE feel like we are being backed into a corner to fight for the survival of the NHS." Those were the words of trainee anaesthetist Karim Salem, a junior doctor who went out on strike in the Black Country last week. Hundreds of appointments were cancelled as junior doctors - objecting to a new contract - left their posts for their third 48-hour action. Mr Salem was among around a dozen people on the picket line at Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital. He said: "For most of us the decision to

walk out is a difficult one. The public is on our side, the government needs to listen to us. "Tired doctors make mistakes. I wouldn't want to fly on a plane with a tired pilot." Emily Gibney, trainee anaesthetist, also said tiredness was a 'worry'. "We are already short of staff and don't want to be stripped any further," she said. Around 15 staff were also out in force at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley. Catherine McGrath, the hospital's junior BMA doctor representative, said: "We still consider the new con-

tract to be unfair, unworkable and unsafe for patients. "We are frustrated and disappointed with the Secretary of State who hasn't been out to engage with us. "If the new contract goes through there could be quite a couple of serious repercussions." Junior doctor Samantha Hughes, said: "We are out here protesting because we feel the current contract is unfair and unsafe for patients. We already have gaps for the rotas for staff. "I hope the government will agree with what we are saying and come back to talk to us."

Chairman in charge of last meeting

Wollaston E TWG

THE March meeting, which was mostly taken up by the AGM was well attended, with Jean Latham taking control of her last meeting as chairman.

Jean has now stood down after five years of very successful leadership and Julie Willetts will replace her. Jean Millward has also resigned after many years as a committee member, and best wishes go to both. All officers and the new committee were introduced to members.

A thank you letter had been received from the children's charity Little Hearts, for the donation from the group's carol service. A thank you acknowledgement from Brenda Adkin following her operation had also been received.

Apologies were read, then the secretary presented the minutes of the previous meeting which were duly signed and passed. She followed with annual reports from all sub-sections and the treasurer's annual financial report. The annual dinner, to be held at Hagley Golf and Country Club on May 31, will cost £23 per person.

Sandra Oliver and Pat McEwan, recipients of the bowls shield and competition cup respectively, were presented with their trophies by the chairman.

The evening concluded with a noisy game of Beetle, while raffle prizes went to Liz Walker and Gwyneth Rudge.

Meetings are at St James Church Hall, Wollaston. New members are welcome.

Meeting enjoyed by biggest turnout yet



Newly-elected committee members practise their tea making skills

ALAN Tumber entertained ladies at the March 16 meeting with some good old fashioned songs and poetry. This was the group's biggest turnout to date with 61 ladies. Afterwards they all enjoyed a cup of tea.

On March 23, the group held its first AGM which was attended by some of its members. This went smoothly and the committee was re-elected.

The next meeting will be on April 20 at Lower Gornal Darby and Joan from 10am

Gornal Wood TWG

until noon. It will feature a rag-rugging demonstration by Pam Faval. Everyone will get the chance to make something.

To celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday an afternoon tea is being organised for April 23 at Zoar Methodist Church from 2-4pm. Tickets are limited and cost £7.50 on a first come first served basis.

Speaker wings in for return visit

Clent Gardening Club

said there were around 20 species of butterflies and 600 types of moth to be found in the UK and explained how to identify the difference.

The popular myth that butterflies are pretty to look at but moths are somewhat dowdy was soon dispelled as Patrick provided some spec-

tacular examples of colourful moths. He dispelled the myth that moths are nocturnal, saying they were difficult to spot during daylight hours due to camouflage when stationary and speed of flight when airborne.

The chairman thanked Patrick for an entertaining and informative talk. He then drew the raffle and announced the results of the monthly competitions.

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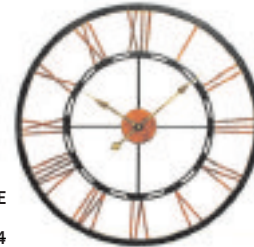
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Alistair Jones, Director of Sales, Chad Danks, Director of Purchasing, Dave Burns, Shop Manager, Matt Danks, Sales Executive, and directors Rodger Danks and Darren Fillingham

Now, whether for a Kitchen it's got to be



Light, airy and spacious with the luxury of a breakfast bar

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

THEY say that the kitchen and the bathroom are the two most important rooms in any home.

Certainly when you have family or friends over, these rooms become the busiest in the house and very often are those that leave the most lasting impression with your guests.

The kitchen is of course considered the heart of any home, but the modern kitchen has now become the 'new living room'.

Over the course of the past 20 years or so, kitchens have transformed from being a utilitarian room where just the cooking is done into one for living in.

They have become a comfortable and enjoyable place for the family to gather and spend time together and for those who enjoy entertaining you will know that the crowd usually gathers in the kitchen.

It is well established that replacing or refurbishing your Kitchen and Bathroom not only makes your

house a more enjoyable place to live, but it can also make or break the sale when put on the market. If done right, it will actually add value.

When it comes to the bathroom, this is the place where you start and finish your day and yet very often is the one room which is most neglected and overlooked.

When you walk in you don't want to be surrounded by tired fixtures and fittings, after all the average person will spend an amazing 1.5 years of his or her lifetime in the bathroom!

Importance

In recognition of the importance of these two rooms in anyone's house, Kingswinford-based company Your Choice Bathrooms have acquired the premises next door to their existing showrooms and launched their new company Your Choice Kitchens.

This will provide the perfect 'one stop' destination to satisfy the increasing demand from those customers looking to refurbish both



Designs to fit any size and shape room

these areas of the house at the same time.

"Whether you are considering refurbishing a tired and dated Bathroom or Kitchen, or would like to go for a completely new look for that matter, there has never been a better time," explains company Director Darren Fillingham.

Before this latest development, the original company, Your Choice Bathrooms, had established itself as one of the leading bathroom companies in the West Midlands, with showrooms in Lichfield Road, Wednesfield and Stallings Lane, Kingswinford. Darren has been

joined in this latest venture by Co-Director Rodger Danks who is an old school friend Darren has known for more than 40 years.

Rodger has been in the Construction and Property Development Industry for 30 years so brings a wealth of experience to the partnership and of course is no stranger to dealing with kitchen manufacturers and suppliers.

"This complementary addition to the existing business is a natural progression for the company, building on the success already achieved by Your Choice Bathrooms," explains Rodger.

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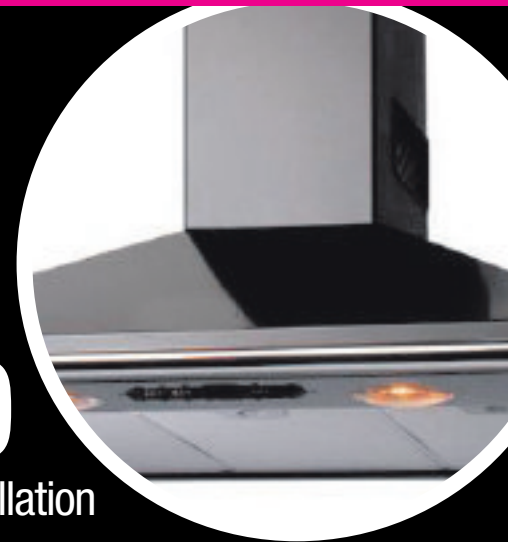


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Premises in Charterfield Shopping Centre, Kingswinford

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

one son Chad Danks whilst his other son Matt will take up the post of Sales Manager.

The new 90 sq metre showroom is bright and airy with five permanent British-made Kitchens layouts on display with an almost endless permutation of range and finishes to ultimately choose from, at a price to suit you.

Friendly

Both showrooms are open daily and once you have a good look around, the friendly and welcoming team are on hand to answer any questions you may have.

They can advise and help you with ideas and inspiration, assisted by a full 20/20 CAD design facility which will help turn your ideas into reality with 20 years in the trade.

They can even tailor make hand-made bespoke cabinets to fit those awkward shaped corners that seem impossible to get anything to fit into.

They offer a range of high spec appliances to complement the kitchen of your choice. Appliances

from Shakers, Smeg, Bosch, Siemens and CDA are available.

Reassuringly, as with the Bathroom side of the business, all trades including the fitters, plumbers, electricians, tilers and floorers are all 'in house' ensuring a smooth transition from 'one trade to another' as your kitchen is being installed!

So whether you are looking for a Kitchen makeover/refurbishment, replacement doors, appliances, new work surfaces or of course a complete replacement kitchen, drop into their Kingswinford showrooms and see what you think.

And now has never been a better time with an opening offer of a FREE CANOPY AND EXTRACTION UNIT WORTH £250 with every kitchen installation.

For more information visit our website: www.yourchoice-kitchens.co.uk or pop in to see us and we can answer any questions you may have whether it be Kitchens or Bathrooms.

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Vintage items can put stamp on room

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

By John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



WE ARE all a little budget-conscious at present and, for anyone trying to furnish a new home, it can seem a pretty daunting task.

It needn't be. You don't have to buy brand new furniture. In fact it's more fun to put your own individual stamp on your rooms with vintage items.

You can pick up old pieces of furniture for very affordable prices and it doesn't matter if they look a bit battered, a little work will make them appear completely different!

Painted furniture is currently hugely popular – look out for those cupboards with different coloured drawers and 'shabby chic' chairs – and you don't have to be an expert to create a good finish.

Old wooden chairs do look great painted in bright colours, little cupboards can be transformed into bedside cabinets and don't be afraid to mix and match.

There are some really lovely furniture paints around, in a variety of attractive shades, and these will lend a completely new lease of life to old tables, chairs, cupboards, you name it.

Stencilling has also become popular once more and if you have the time it makes items look that bit different.

It's great to create your own individual interior design scheme, buying 'off the peg' means you have exactly the same furniture as lots of other people.

So decide on a budget and what furniture you need, then make a list of things to look out for.

Remember that it isn't a crime to combine contemporary items with vintage pieces, as long they look good together, and furniture that looks 'too modern' can be painted to fit in with the overall room design.

You will be pleasantly surprised at the very reasonable prices currently paid in the antiques saleroom for tables, chairs, desks, sideboards, wardrobes, beds and bookcases.

Dark pieces in particular sell very cheaply, even if they are well-made and in good condition, and, if you think they might look little gloomy, get that paint-brush out!

Old pine is also very affordable just now, you could furnish a bedroom with bed, cupboard, wardrobe and swing mirror on a relatively small budget.

Oak and mahogany dining tables can be matched with various chairs, that don't literally have to match, and old sideboards provide excellent storage space for plates, cutlery and glasses.

A kitchen can be free-standing rather than totally fitted, again you can find old Welsh dressers, cupboards, benches and pine tables in the saleroom.

An old pine washstand would look good in a bathroom, plus some vintage shelves and a towel stand.

Even your home office can be furnished with antique pieces, ranging from desks and chests of drawers to cabinets and file boxes.

So head off to the saleroom and snap up those furniture bargains – and remember that even those that appear dark and gloomy can be transformed with a lick of paint!

Perry and Phillips holds valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm at their Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, and auctions of antiques and collectables are held on the first Tuesday of each month.

Even the cheapest jewellery can be priceless



The choice of style is endless



Diamonds are forever sought after

THE jewellery we wear defines us, it is an extension of our personality, a sentimental token or finish to an outfit, allowing us to express ourselves and our individuality.

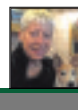
Jewellery has been worn for 100,000 years, originally to define the wearers rank or political and religious status. Egypt, India and China developed the earliest items and the style of specific pieces characterize an era.

In the 20th Century the 1920s brought long strings of beads, the 1940s brooches of all shapes and sizes, angular plastic bangles in the 60s and large fancy earrings in the 80s, more recently large elaborate beaded collar necklaces have been popular and as with clothing the trends continue to change year on year.

Spring/summer brings with it dramatic statement earrings, large and elaborate multiple rings on fingers, stacked bracelets and striking necklaces. The choice of style and price is endless, high street shops such as Claire's Accessories offer affordable shiny delights and items from Pandora and Swarovski are sought after gifts for birthdays and Christmas. No matter what your budget

STYLE FOCUS

With Janet Timmis



may be there will be something suitable. I find it delightful that a £1 necklace from a supermarket can be re-boxed to make a lovely gift. Locally 'Temptations' in Market Drayton has traditional and contemporary pieces full of character and originality.

Jewellery, like music, can also make memories, bought to mark occasions, births, marriages, achievements. I have jewellery owned by my grandma, pieces bought on holidays, given to me by family and charity shop bargains. My favourites include a piece of a glass chandelier, bought in Venice and worn as a necklace and a silver necklace stamped with my son's fingerprint. The designers have pushed the boundaries using unusual combinations of materials, motivational quotes, prints, and enamels. Wedding rings are no longer a simple gold band but available in

steel, titanium and bronze with inset diamonds and engraved words, the design is as important to the groom as it is to the bride.

The tradition of giving an engagement ring was introduced by Maximilian of Austria in 1477 although the Egyptians gave braided papyrus rings to symbolize eternity, the hole in the middle a gateway leading to the future. It is said that the wedding ring is worn on the third finger left hand as it was believed a vein in that finger is directly connected to the heart, scientists have proved this not to be the case but the tradition remains.

The combination of gold and diamonds is forever sought after. The majority of today's diamonds are mined in South Africa, the name diamond derived from an ancient Greek word meaning 'unbreakable' and they are created by deep volcanic eruptions. The first synthetic diamonds appeared in the 1950s and continue to delight. The most well-known is cubic zirconia. How would anyone know if the jewel you wear was real or synthetic?

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Sociable Boxer Bailey loves to give cuddles



Happy-go-lucky crossbred Smithy



What about a St Bernard? Loveable Oliver has a very big heart

Doggy OAPs still have plenty to offer as pets



Toodle Pip the terrier is full of fun

DOGS Trust Shrewsbury is 'full to the rafters' with elderly dogs and staff are reaching out to local dog lovers in the hope they will consider adopting a 'doggy OAP'.

Dogs Trust consider any dog aged eight and over as elderly, and there are currently 35 dogs at the Roden based animal shelter who fit this bill.

As the rehoming centre reaches out to the dog loving public, staff hope to challenge the elderly dog stereotype that put off many potential owners from adopting such a dog.

Shapes

Dogs Trust Shrewsbury supporter relations officer Lee Pogson explains: "We cater for dogs of all shapes, sizes and ages at Dogs Trust."

"Recently we have noticed a spike in the average age of the dogs here at Shrewsbury, we aren't sure what's sparking the trend but we will care for each and every one of them until they find a forever home."

"Many people believe older dogs have their best years behind them but this couldn't be further from the truth."

"No dog is too old to learn new tricks and most mature dogs are already housetrained

Report by Rachel Jenkins

so they are very clean and tidy in a home. "Older dogs are often calmer too, and more independent so can be left to occupy themselves for longer periods."

"There are countless reasons an older dog can make a wonderful companion, so please don't rule them out."

Current doggy OAPs currently awaiting forever homes at Dogs Trust Shrewsbury include:

Bailey, Boxer, 13 years old – Bailey is a wonderful dog and a favourite with all the staff. She currently lives at Oakfield, Shrewsbury's old dog's home. She loves her food and plenty of cuddles. She's a sociable lady with lots of character. She can live with children aged 10 and over. Bailey will make a wonderful addition to a loving family home.

Oliver, St Bernard, 11 years old – Oliver is a big dog with an even bigger heart. This lovely boy is looking for a cosy home with owners who will shower him with lots of attention as he loves human company. Oliver would like his owners to be around for the majority of the time. He can live with young children and potentially another pet in his new home.

Smithy, Crossbreed, eight years old – Smithy is a happy-go-lucky, handsome

chap who doesn't reflect his eight years. He has a very friendly personality and loves lots of fuss and attention from his canine carers. Smithy is looking for a home where he will be the only pet so he can lap up all the attention himself. He can live with children aged 10 and over.

Toodles Pip, Terrier cross, 10 years old – Toodles Pip is a typical Terrier with a great personality and the looks to match. He's self-sufficient and will happily amuse himself all day long. He enjoys the company of other dogs and loves playing when he is out on walks.

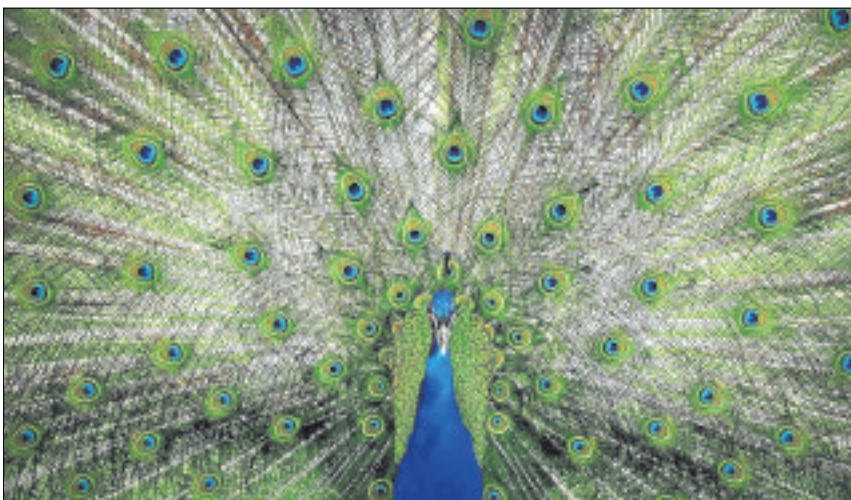
He is looking for an experienced home with adult owners who will give him the peace and quiet he needs in his old age. Toodles Pip will make a loyal companion to the right owner.

If you're interested in rehoming any of Shrewsbury's wonderful OAPs contact the Dogs Trust on 0300 303 0292 or visit <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/our-centres/shrewsbury/> more information.

Dogs Trust is working towards the day when all dogs can enjoy a happy life, free from the threat of unnecessary destruction.

Dogs Trust is the UK's largest dog welfare charity and cares for nearly 17,000 dogs each year through its network of 20 Rehoming Centres across the UK and one in Dublin.

Picture of peacock struts to award



Deepak Lal's peacock picture at Dudley Zoo ruffled the feathers of the Star Witness judges

WITH its bright blue, purple and green colours – this vibrant peacock is a behold to see as he spreads his wings.

This beautiful bird was captured on camera at Dudley Zoo by Deepak Lal.

Mr Lal, aged 40, from Edgbaston, submitted the photograph for the Express & Star's Star Witness and the IT worker was January's winner, scooping £100. Mr Lal used

a Fuji camera to take a picture of the bird, which he noticed turn round to him and spread its feathers.

He said: "I happened to be passing through an area of the zoo when I saw the peacock, it stood looking at me with its feathers raised. "The composition and the subject made the picture so impressive, I'm delighted with it."

Health chiefs' tough year

HEALTH bosses running services across Dudley say they are braced for a challenging period, despite meeting a planned £6.3 surplus.

Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group says it will need to focus on 'reducing financial risk' following the transfer of funding to Dudley Council for the Better Care Fund.

Speaking at a Dudley CCG board

meeting, chief financial officer Matt Hartland said: "The most important message is that it will be the toughest year for the board.

"We will be in a much tighter position and will need to focus on quality, innovation, productivity and prevention savings. All of our costs for the budget next year are under pressure."

The CCG will also be required to create a one per cent spend reserve and a 0.5 per cent contingency reserve.

Paul Maubach, director of commissioning development, said: "Our funding position is in a much better state than some of our neighbours. We have a one per cent transition reserve but will not be able to spend it due to the failings in other systems."

Steve Wellings, primary commissioning group chairman, said: "This is a financially managed organisation. Over the years we have taken that very seriously."

Council boss sorry over child services failings

DUDLEY Council chief executive Sarah Norman has apologised over a damning Ofsted report which rated the authority's children's services as inadequate.

"I can only apologise to the children, young people and families in Dudley that the services aren't good enough," she said.

An inspection by the watchdog flagged up long-standing, systemic failings across the department.

Government commissioner Eleanor Brazil has been appointed to help get children's services up to scratch, with a three-month remit to review the department's performance. If improvements are not made in that time children's services in Dudley could be taken over by the Government.

Ms Norman, who joined the authority in January 2015, admitted serious work had to be done to get the department back on track. However, she said the authority has already recognised the need for improvements and had got these under way.

The Ofsted report is critical across the board, with inadequate ratings for 'children who need help and protection', 'children looked after and achieving permanence', 'adoption performance', and 'leadership, management and governance'.

It adds some vulnerable youngsters had to wait for three months for contact with a social worker.

The performance of councillors also comes under fire, prompting calls for the heads of former cabinet member for children's services Councillor Tim Crompton and council leader Pete Lowe by their political opponents.

Ms Norman said she fully accepted the findings of the report and warned it could take 'months' to make the needed improvements.



Council chief executive Sarah Norman has apologised after the Ofsted report

Take art with festival event

A TWO-day arts festival takes place in Cradley Heath this weekend.

Cradley Heath Creative is hosting the event, called Grassroots.

It will feature a variety of art activities – from art workshops to performances, an exhibition, a collective paint-by-numbers and an ongoing mural.

There will also be showings of films of Black Country people made by artist Martin Parr, courtesy of Multistory, as well as history and zombie films

made locally. The festival is attracting artistic types who live in Cradley Heath and those from further afield. Performers include Billy Spake Mon, Walsall Poetry Society and The Sham-bollocks.

It will take place the Hollybush pub, on Newtown Lane, on Saturday, from 11am until late, and on Sunday, between 11am and 5pm.

For more details, contact Fran Wilde, chairman of Cradley Heath Creative on 07952 563725.

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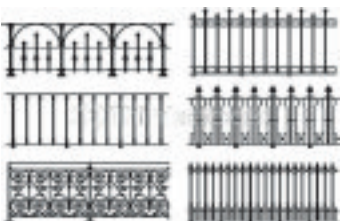
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The mild winter has benefitted many of our garden birds, says the RSPB

Mild winter brings boost for smaller garden birds

THE mild winter has benefitted smaller garden birds such as long-tailed tits, after numbers increased this year in Shropshire.

Warmer weather leading up to the 2016 Big Garden Birdwatch in January helped boost numbers of long-tailed tits by 44 per cent on last year, bringing them into the top 10 most commonly spotted birds for the first time in seven years.

Other small garden birds saw numbers increase, including coal tits, with sightings in gardens up by a quarter on 2015's count. The Big Garden Birdwatch was organised by the RSPB and saw more than 519,000 people took part in the bird-watching event over a weekend in January, counting well over 8.2 million birds in hour-long surveys of their garden or local park. A number of organised events took place in Shropshire.

As spring unfolds the number of birds in our gardens has increased and John Hughes, development manager for the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, said all the usual suspects were now evident in the county.

He said: "We have blackbirds, thrushes, spar-

rows, robins, great tits and chaffinches in the gardens now. It is a time of great activity for the birds as they are nest building. Spring is also the peak time to hear the dawn chorus, when the bird's proclaim their territory or call for a mate."

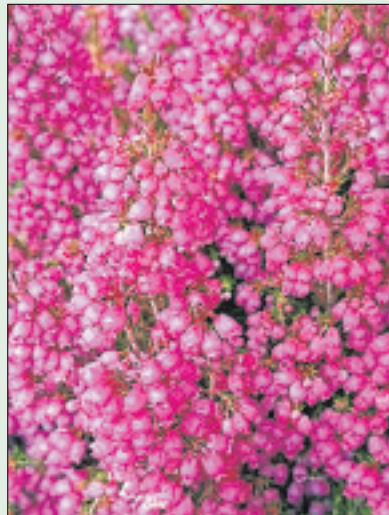
Mr Hughes said that while seasonal activity was up, there had been a decline in bird numbers overall due to their habitats disappearing, a consequence of intensive farming.

He said: "Because of the destruction of their natural habitat gardens are now more important than ever. This doesn't mean people have to spend a fortune on bird seed, there are plenty of cheap options for helping encourage birds into their garden."

"You could leave some areas of the garden a bit rough to encourage insects, which in turn will draw birds in to eat those insects, and people should also avoid using sprays to kill off insects too."

Despite the boost in numbers for some species, the RSPB survey revealed that others continue to decline. Starlings saw another fall this year, bringing their reduction in numbers to more than 80 per cent since the survey began in 1979.

Colourful heathers will cheer up troughs



BEST OF THE BUNCH – Erica Carnea

Spring-flowering heather is a real winner in tubs, troughs, beds and borders, even in windy gardens.

There are lots of different named varieties in white, pink, red, mauve or purple and they look wonderful planted in front of conifers and evergreens, as they grow to around 8in (20cm) high and 18in (45cm) wide.

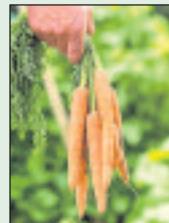
They are generally lime-haters and do well planted in ericaceous compost in full sun.

If you want something slightly taller, go for *E. darleyensis*, which grows to around 60cm (2ft) and blooms between November and April.

They are also wonderful planted in containers with dwarf conifers, pansies, ivy and red-berried *Skimmia reevesiana*, to make a really colourful scene on the patio or by the front door.

Once flowers have faded, the plants should be trimmed back lightly, but make sure you don't cut back into old wood.

GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT – Carrots



You should be able to make the first outdoor sowings of carrots now, but try to warm the soil up first to aid germination.

Your soil needs to be free of stones or you'll get funny-shaped carrots, but alternatively you could grow some in deep pots of compost.

For a continuous supply of baby carrots, sow a short row and keep sowing at regular intervals through the summer, drawing out a 1.5cm seed

drill, spacing the drills 15cm apart.

Water the area with a fine rose watering can to minimise seed disturbance and keep the soil moist until germination.

Once seedlings are large enough to handle, thin them out, leaving one seedling every 2-4cm. Further thin them a month later to a final spacing of 10cm.

The first baby carrots should be ready for pulling in June.

Good varieties include 'Early French Frame', which are small and round and won't fork if they hit a stone, or 'Early Nantes', which grow well in light, sandy soil.

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

1. Prune plum trees once they have started growing.
2. Make sure pots and seed trays in the greenhouse do not dry out.
3. Cut off dead flower spikes from summer-flowering heathers and prune young tree heathers.
4. Make the first outdoor sowings of culinary and salad herbs.
5. Apply a spring fertiliser to established lawns once they are actively growing and cut grass when it is about 8cm (3in) high.
6. Transplant autumn-sown onions to their final quarters, spacing them alternately at 12in (30cm).
7. Thin early sowings of lettuce.
8. Give roses a top dressing of rose fertiliser.
9. Sow campanulas under glass.
10. Clear remaining crops of leeks and celery so the ground can be prepared for new crops.

Protect your plants and possessions from theft

By Hannah Stephenson

AS Britain's botanical gardens beef up security following an increase in the theft of valuable rare plants, there are many measures we can take to protect our own garden ornaments and plants

We may not have rare plants in our gardens that are worth a fortune on the black market, but our ornaments, costly containers and mature trees would cost a lot to replace.

As reports that the increase in thefts of valuable rare plants is forcing the RHS garden at Wisley, Surrey and the Royal Botanic Gardens in both Kew and Edinburgh to assess security and install extra CCTV, now is the time to think of our own plots.

Each year, property owners lose millions of pounds worth of garden equipment, including mowers, furniture, expensive statuary and ornaments and even York stone paving slabs and turf.

Here are ways to minimise the risk of theft:

BOUNDARIES

Fit trellis on top of a fence to improve security. Trellis is fairly fragile – it won't support the weight of a human – and difficult to climb. However, anything higher than 2m and you'll need planning permission.

Grow spiky hedges of holly, berberis, hawthorn or blackthorn. Most conifers will form a thick hedge that is difficult to get through. Thorny shrubs are most effective. Other thorny shrubs which will make a medium to large hedge up to 1.8m (6ft) include *pyracantha* and *Rosa rugosa*, while low-growing thorny shrubs can be positioned at the base of fences and below windows and drainpipes to deter intruders.

PATHS

Gravel paths act as a deterrent as any visitor will scrunch up the driveway or gravelled approach in the back garden, alerting the home-owner.

PLANTS

You may not have rare plants, but you could have valuable mature specimens in pots. If you have bay trees framing your front door, invest in the heaviest pots you can to deter thieves.

Tough, deep roots are the best anchor- age. So grow plants from small specimens to allow them time and space to mature and their strong, developed root system will make it very difficult for opportunist thieves to easily dig them up.

Invest in a specialist land anchor when planting expensive trees and shrubs.

Plant new shrubs through a layer of chicken wire topped with soil, which makes them harder to dig up.

ORNAMENTS

Take pictures of your ornaments in case they are stolen and write your postcode on them in ultra violet pen so they can be traced back to you if retrieved.

Fit alarms which will go off if they are moved, but won't respond to wind or rain.

Secure them to the ground or to a nearby post or pillar by chaining them to an 'anchor'. You can buy proprietary land



Planting spiky hedges of holly, such as *Ilex aquifolium* "Silver Queen", will help to strengthen your boundaries against intruders



Gravel paths will scrunch up, alerting the home-owner



Sheds need strong hinges and a good padlock

anchors, most of which are based on a permanent stake to which the item is bolted or chained. Or fix coach bolts through the pot's drainage holes and bolt the container to the ground. Urns, statues and large planters could alternatively be cemented in place.

SHED

Check that your shed is secure. It needs strong hinges and a good padlock. Consider fitting a battery operated alarm or even extending your house alarm to protect it.

Security mark all tools, mowers, garden furniture, ornaments and other valuables

so if they are offered for sale and the thief apprehended, you may be reunited with them.

FRONT GARDEN

Keep front-garden hedges and fences low – 1m is ideal – so intruders can't hide behind them.

Hide your best specimens from view. If you really want your hanging baskets in the front, consider padlocking them to their supports, or chaining bay trees to a pillar. But remember, what is not on view is less likely to be stolen.

If you have a padlocked gate connecting

the front and the back, make sure it is as high and strong as your fencing. Use locks at top and bottom and make sure the hinges are fixed to the gatepost so the gate cannot be lifted off its hinges.

LIGHTING

Install motion-sensitive lights both front and back. This can be a great deterrent. Consider installing CCTV – look for systems you can monitor from your mobile.

INSURANCE

Check your household insurance policy covers theft from your garden and outbuildings.

fast the ticket

Whole Lott of fun for Pixie

Pop star drops in
for breakfast
See Page 23



Max appeal

Lisa Maxwell – Page 23

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4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Bursin Hotel
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• Includes River Explorer Cruise & Beatles Tour
SAT 23 APR, 28 MAY, 18 JUN, 9, 30 JUL, 13 AUG

POLAR BEARS, PENGUINS & KINGDOM OF ICE



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OVERNIGHT HALF BOARD
• Includes admission to Yorkshire Wildlife Park, home of UK's only Polar Bears & The Deep Kingdom of Ice!
SAT 21 MAY, 16 JUL, 6 AUG, 3 SEP, 15 OCT

BOURNEMOUTH & GUERNSEY CRUISE



5 DAYS FROM **£199.95**
4 NIGHTS HALF BOARD Carrington House Hotel
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EVENTS

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We also hold a popular music festival a couple of times a year and plans are underway to create a Folk/Jazz club in the cellar bar (musicians get in touch!).

Here's what a typical week entails at the Samson and Lion of Stourbridge.

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Ken Dodd



Saturday, 7.30pm
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham
The legendary funnyman will be tickling the masses with his own brand of wit in the Happiness show. Expect more than five-hours of gags and music. Call 0844 871 3011.

Jeff Lynne's ELO




Saturday & Sunday, Genting Arena
The iconic musician comes 'home' to deliver Alone in the Universe, the first new Electric Light Orchestra material in 15 years. Support comes from The Feeling Visit www.gentingarena.co.uk

Rob Beckett



Saturday, Stafford Gatehouse, 8pm
The comedian, a regular panellist on the likes of Mock the Week and 8 out of 10 Cats, gets his teeth into a host of issues, like Kit Kats in his Mouth of the South show. Visit www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk

Pasha Kovalev



Sunday, Grand Theatre Wolverhampton
The 2014 Strictly winner tours with his new show It's All About You, featuring spectacular choreography and costumes. He is joined by colleague Strictly Anya Garnis. Visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk

ROCK & POP

Moon Sugar
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
The Rainbow, Birmingham,
B12 0LD.
Call 0121 753 1818

Three Blind Mice
Thu at 8.30pm,
Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge,
DY8 3TB.
Call 01384 374410

High Tyde
Tue at 8.30pm,
The Sunflower Lounge,
Birmingham, B5 4EG.
Call 0121 632 6756

Nerina Pallot
Tomorrow at 6pm - 10pm,
The Institute, Birmingham,
B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

The King Of Pop: The Legend Continues: Tribute
Thu at 7.30pm,
Oakengates Theatre, Telford,
TF2 6EP.
Call 01952 382382

Wolfmother
Sat at 6pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham,
B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

We Are Z
Thu at 7pm,
The Slade Rooms,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1RQ.
Call 0870 320 7000

The Mersey Beatles: The Beatles Tribute
Sat at 7.30pm, £16.50
Prince Of Wales Centre,
Cannock,
WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 578762

Cast
Sat at 7pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham,
B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

Jeff Lynne's ELO
Sat at 7.30pm, Sun at 7.30pm,
Genting Arena, Birmingham,
B40 1NT.
Call 0121 780 4141

Newton Faulkner
Sat at 6.30pm,
The Institute, Birmingham,
B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

Abbanania: Tribute To Abba
Thu at 7.30pm, £19.50
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

The Spitfires
Wed at 7pm,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath,
Birmingham,
B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

Chas & Dave
Sat at 9pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

Tasita d'Mour: Tina Turner Tribute
Thu at 9.30pm,
The Jam House, Birmingham,
B3 1QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

NAO
Wed at 7pm,
The Institute, Birmingham,
B5 6DY.
Call 0121 643 0428

FOLK & ACOUSTIC

Marlon Williams
Thu at 7.30pm - 11pm,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath,
Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

Treetop Flyers
Sun at 7.30pm - 11pm, £8
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath,
Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

The Young 'Uns
Mon at 7.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

BLUES, JAZZ & SOUL

The Blues Band
Sat at 7.30pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Blues Club With Playing Django
Sat at 4pm - 8pm,
Hare & Hounds, King's Heath,
Birmingham, B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

CLASSICAL & OTHER MUSIC

Special Kinda Madness: Specials & Madness Tribute
Sat at 7pm, £8
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

Discharge
Sat at 6pm - 10pm,
The Rainbow, Birmingham,
B12 0LD. Call 0121 753 1818

Solo Piano Improvisation
Tomorrow at 7.45pm - 9pm,
Birmingham Conservatoire,
Birmingham City University,
B3 3HG. Call 0121 331 5901

David Franke
Wed at 7.30pm - 9.30pm,
Birmingham Conservatoire,
Birmingham City University,
B3 3HG. Call 0121 331 5901

Code 46
Wed at 7pm,
Hare & Hounds, Kings Heath,
Birmingham,
B14 7JZ.
Call 0844 870 0000

City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra: Disney Frozen In Concert
Sat at 2pm, 6pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Cash: Johnny Cash Tribute
Wed at 7pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham,
B1 1DB.
Call 0121 622 8250

Shalamar
Wed at 9pm,
The Jam House, Birmingham,
B31QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

CBSO Centre Stage: CBSO Cellos The Americas!
Thu at 1.10pm, £10
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra: Romeo And Juliet
Wed at 7.30pm, £12.50 - £45
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

TV Smith
Tomorrow at 8.30pm,
Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge,
DY8 3TB.
Call 01384 374410

COMEDY

Rob Beckett: Mouth Of The South
Sat at 8pm, £12 - £14
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Roy Chubby Brown
Tomorrow at 7.30pm, Sat at 7.30pm, £20 - £21
Palace Theatre, Redditch,
B98 8AE.
Call 01527 65203

Thursday Night Comedy Carousel
Thu at 7.30pm,
The Glee Club, Birmingham,
B5 4TD.
Call 0871 472 0400

Gein's Family Giftshop's Trophy Collection
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Stuart Goldsmith: An Hour
Wed at 7.30pm,
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,
WV1 1SE.
Call 01902 321321

Ken Dodd: The Happiness Show
Sat at 7pm,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham,
B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

THEATRE

Elf The Musical: Stafford Gatehouse Youth Theatre
Tomorrow at 7.30pm, Sat at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Vienna Festival Ballet: Swan Lake
Wed at 7pm,
Oakengates Theatre, Telford,
TF2 6EP.
Call 01952 382382

Return To The Forbidden Planet: Stafford Gatehouse Youth Theatre
Wed at 7pm, Thu at 7pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Late Night Love
Thu at 7.30pm,
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,
WV1 1SE.
Call 01902 321321

Stig Of The Dump (Over 6s)
Sun at 3pm,
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

Scottish Opera & Music Theatre Wales: The Devil Inside
Mon at 7.30pm,
Birmingham Rep, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Pasha Kovalev: It's All About You
Sun at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Calamity Jane: Stafford & District Operatic Society
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 7.30pm,
Thu at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

Ireland's Call
Tomorrow at 7.30pm,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham,
B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

My Friend Peter
Sun at 11.30am, 2.30pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Working
Thu at 7.30pm,
Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock,
WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 578762

Dalloway
Wed at 8pm,
mac, Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

How To Be Happy With The Speakmans
Thu at 8pm,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

End Of The Rainbow
Mon at 7.30pm, 7.30pm, Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Music Theatre Wales: The Devil Inside
Mon at 7.30pm,
Birmingham Rep, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Derren Brown: Miracle
Tomorrow at 7.30pm, Sat at 7.30pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 573320

Twelfth Night
Tomorrow at 7.30pm, Sat at 2pm, 7.30pm,
Birmingham Rep, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Folk
Tue at 7pm, 7.45pm, Wed at 7.45pm, Thu at 7.45pm,
Birmingham Rep, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Rumpelstiltskin: Big Brum Theatre
Sat at 11.30am, 2pm,
Birmingham Rep, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

Breakfast At Tiffany's
Mon at 7.30pm, Tue at 7.30pm,
Wed at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm,
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham,
B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

Mary Poppins
Tomorrow at 7.30pm, Mon at 7.30pm, Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2pm, 2pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 2pm, 7.30pm, £25.55 - £30.60
Birmingham Hippodrome,
B5 4TB.
Call 0844 338 5000

That'll Be The Day
Tomorrow at 7.30pm, £23.50
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
ST16 2LT.
Call 01785 254653

CLASSES & COURSES

Science Of Sound
Wed at 10am,
Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
B1 2EA.
Call 0121 780 3333

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Pixie has Lott to offer in iconic role

POP princess Pixie Lott takes on the iconic role of Holly Golightly in a new touring production of *Breakfast At Tiffany's*.

Taking on the role made famous by the legendary Audrey Hepburn in 1961 film, the chart-topping singer will star alongside *Downton Abbey* actor Matt Barber, who stars as Fred. Former *Bread* and *Goodnight Sweetheart* Victor McGuire will play Joe Bell.

Making up the cast are Robert Calvert, Naomi Cranston, Charlie De Melo, Tim Frances, Andrew Joshi, Melanie La Barrie and Sevan Stephan, with Katy Allen and Andy Watkins.



Pixie Lott as Holly Golightly



Pixie Lott and Matt Barber as Fred

Enigmatic

It reaches Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre next week, April 18 to 23, as part of a UK and Ireland tour that runs from March 3 to April 30, with Lott heading up the cast. It continues from June 13 to 25.

Emily Atack and former *Corrie* actress and *Strictly* contestant Georgia May Foote are also lined up to take on the enigmatic role at some stage during the tour.

Truman Capote's classic novella, set in New York in 1943, has been adapted for the stage by Pulitzer Prize-winning finalist and Tony and Olivier Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg and contains memorable songs from the era as well as original music by Grant Olding.

Still only 25, Lott has had three

number one albums and topped the single charts three times with *Mama Do*, *Boys and Girls* and *All About Tonight*. She was a successful contestant on series 10 of *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2014.

Director Nikolai Foster said: "It's a testament to the beauty of Capote's imagination, the extraordinary char-

acters he created and Greenberg's faithful adaptation, that alongside Pixie and Matt, we have assembled such an accomplished company of actors to bring this dazzling play to life."

Call 0844 871 3011, for groups of 10-plus call 0844 871 3031 or visit www.atgtickets.co.uk/birmingham

Loose Woman Lisa fits The Bill as Judy

LISA Maxwell shakes off her Loose Women tag as she makes her stage acting debut as Judy Garland, hitting Wolverhampton next week.

Maxwell, a former children's TV presenter, who also represented the UK in *A Song For Europe*, performed alongside Russ Abbot in the early 1990s, but made her name in *The Bill* as DS Samantha Nixon.

She spent five years on ITV's *Loose Women* panel, but is now touring the UK in the West End and Broadway hit *End of the Rainbow*. It reaches the Grand Theatre from April 18-20 and also stars comedian Gary Wilmot and former *EastEnders* actor Sam Attwater.

Set in 1968, the once-glittering Judy Garland is in London to make an explosive comeback. But off stage, holed up in her hotel room, she is battling with her young new fiancé, her devoted accom-

panist, and her destructive addictions. Will she be able to conquer her demons and reclaim her crown as one of history's great musical icons?

The funny and emotionally-charged musical features some of Garland's most memorable songs including *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*.

Gary Wilmot will play Anthony. His own musical theatre stardom began when he played Bill Snibson in *Me and My Girl* at the Adelphi Theatre and has a host of theatre credits to his name.

Attwater, who plays Mickey, made his TV acting debut in 2009, playing Ricky in *Hollyoaks*.

Credits

The following year he joined *EastEnders* and its online spin-off *EastEnders: E20*, as Leon Small. Stage credits include Brad in the 40th anniversary tour of *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Dreamboats and Petticoats* in the West End, and the 2014 UK tour of *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. He won the sixth series of ITV's *Dancing on Ice* in 2011.

End of the Rainbow first premiered at the Sydney Opera House in 2005, before playing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2006. It returned to the UK in 2010, transferring to the West End for a six-month run. It received four Olivier Award nominations. A Broadway run followed in 2012.

Showtimes are 7.30pm with a 2.30pm Wednesday matinee. Call 01902 429212 or visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk

Will she be able to conquer her demons?

Rockers Rabbit on at the Robin

COCKNEY rockers Chas n Dave will be giving it some Rabbit at the Robin 2 in Bilston this weekend.

The chirpy duo marked their 50th anniversary in showbusiness three years ago and play the Mount Pleasant venue on Saturday. Tickets are £22.50 in advance or £24.50 on the door.

Former *Zombies* frontman Colin Blunstone performs next week. Support on Wednesday, April 20, comes from Balsamo Deighton. Tickets are £16 in advance or £17.50 on the door, while punk legends UK Subs are in action the following night, tickets at £12 or £14.

Book at www.therobin.co.uk or on 01902 401211.

Comic duo mark 25th anniversary

COMEDY stars Reeves and Mortimer will perform in Birmingham as part of their forthcoming national tour.

The duo's live show, 25 years of Reeves and Mortimer: *The Poignant Moments*, plays at the Barclaycard Arena on December 9.

The show is a celebration of the first 25 years of their professional collaboration from *Vic Reeves Big Night Out*, through *Smell of Reeves & Mortimer*, *Bang*, *Bang It's Reeves & Mortimer*, *Shooting Stars* and *House Of Fools*.

For more details, or for ticket information, visit www.barclycardarena.co.uk

X Factor winner has All That Jazz

HIT musical *Chicago* tops the list of dazzling new productions announced at the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham.

The award-winning musical *Chicago* will be the Christmas show at the Station Street venue. It will be staged December 12 to 31. The casting has yet to be announced.

Fans don't have to wait that long, however, as the musical is being staged at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from June 20-25, starring X Factor winner Sam Bailey, former *EastEnders* actor John Partridge and another former soap star Hayley Tamaddon. For ticket details, www.grandtheatre.co.uk

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CHOICE



Michael McIntyre

Michael McIntyre's Big Show (BBC1, 7pm)

New series. The lively comedian hosts an evening of entertainment, recorded in front of an audience assembled at London's Theatre Royal on Drury Lane. Each week, Michael introduces sets by his fellow stand-ups, musical performances, dance revues and various other hijinks. He begins by inviting R&B star Tinie Tempah to perform, and the Peres Brothers Group put on a dazzling acrobatic show. The host also hijacks former Spice Girl Geri Horner's mobile phone in Celebrity Send To All, which sees him fire of an embassising message to all the contacts in her directory, and one unsuspecting member of the public is given a chance to sing a special duet with Michael Ball.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** MasterChef. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The afternoon session on day one at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.25** Can't Touch This. **6.15** **Pointless Celebrities.** Brix Smith-Start, Jonathan Phang, Amy Childs, Sam Faiers, Grace Woodward, Brendan Courtney, Leo Stafford and Nicky Clarke all take part in the unorthodox quiz show. **7.00** **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** New series. The comedian hosts an evening of entertainment at London's Theatre Royal, beginning with music by Tinie Tempah and acrobatics by the Peres Brothers Group. **7.55** **The National Lottery: Win Your Wish List.** A former soldier and his wife team up to answer a selection of questions in the hope of winning life-changing prizes from their personal wish list. Shane Richie hosts. Includes the Lotto and Thunderball draws, with Kate Garraway. **8.45** **Casualty.** Rita receives the surprise of her life and struggles to control her emotions when a face from her past arrives at the ED. Medical drama, starring Chloe Howman. **9.35** **Mrs Brown's Boys.** Agnes and the Brown family await the fruits of their fraud after faking Grandad's death to get a payout, but the insurance company starts to grow suspicious. (R) **10.05** BBC News; Weather. **10.25** **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Norwich City v Sunderland at Carrow Road and Chelsea v Manchester City at Stamford Bridge; National Lottery Update. **11.45** **Live at the Apollo.** Leading performers on the stand-up circuit share their light-hearted views on modern life in this show recorded before a packed house at London's Hammersmith Apollo. (R) **12.20** Snooker: World Championship Extra. **3.20** Snooker Classic Matches. **5.20** Weather for the Week Ahead. **5.25** BBC News.

BBC2

6.25 **Film:** The Magic Box. (1951) **8.10** Natural World. (R) **9.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **12.00** Rick Stein: From Venice to Istanbul. (R) **1.00** **Film:** Lust for Life. (1956) Biopic of Van Gogh, starring Kirk Douglas. **3.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.45** Flog It! (R) **4.30** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The afternoon session on day one at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. **5.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **6.00** **Bake Off: Creme de la Creme.** Chef Tom Kerridge hosts the search for Britain's best team of pastry chefs. Joining him at one of the country's grandest stately homes are 15 teams of pastry chefs, all wanting to prove that they are the "crème de la crème". (R) **7.00** **Live Snooker: The World Championship.** The concluding session on the opening day at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where the first-round match featuring Stuart Bingham reaches a conclusion. **8.00** **Grand Tours of Scotland.** Paul Merton paddles a replica of a Rob Roy canoe from the 1890s along now-dissused steamer routes, going from loch to loch in Argyll before heading out to Islay. **8.30** **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring and the platoon dress as firemen to take part in an initiative exercise, but soon find themselves tackling a real fire. Comedy, starring Arthur Lowe and Clive Dunn. (R) **9.00** **Tom Jones' 1950s: The Decade That Made Me.** Tom Jones recalls his formative years in South Wales, in the first of four retrospective documentaries in which celebrated musicians look back at the decades that defined them. **10.00** **Shirley.** Biopic of Shirley Bassey, charting the singer's early career, from her roots in 1930s Cardiff to the start of her rise to stardom in the 1960s. Ruth Negga (Misfits) stars. (R) **11.10** **Snooker: The World Championship.** Jason Mohammad presents highlights of the evening session on the opening day at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. **12.00** **Film:** First Snow. (2006) **1.35** **Film:** Freestyle. (2010) **2.55** This Is BBC Two. **5.30** Great British Garden Revival. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITY: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.15** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.05** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.45** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.29** Regional Programme. **12.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.30** **Film:** Superman. (1978) Comic-strip adventure, starring Christopher Reeve. **4.25** The Wine Show. **5.30** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.45** ITV News; Weather. **6.00** **You've Been Framed! Goes Wild.** Harry Hill presents a selection of the wildest clips submitted to the show, including a video that demonstrates why breaking wind while taking a selfie is a bad idea. **7.00** **Bang on the Money.** New series. Rickie Haywood-Williams and Melvin Odom host the show in which two teams of friends aim to hit a target number in a series of physical and mental challenges. **8.00** **Britain's Got Talent.** The nationwide talent contest continues as Ant and Dec go behind-the-scenes at the second round of auditions to meet some of this year's hopeful entertainers. As ever, Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, Alesha Dixon and David Walliams take their seats on the judges' panel to rate the performances. Plus, both the Georgie hosts and all four judges have access to a Golden Buzzer, which they can use to send any entrant they believe has that extra something special straight through to the live semi-finals. **9.20** **Play to the Whistle.** New series. Holly Willoughby returns with the sports-themed comedy panel show, as Frank Lampard and Bradley Walsh are joined by Richard Osman, Tom Daley and Rob Beckett. **10.05** ITV News; Weather. **10.20** **Film:** 2 Fast 2 Furious. (2003) A disgraced cop is given a chance to redeem himself by going undercover to bring a drug trafficker to justice. Thriller sequel, with Paul Walker. **12.15** Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The King of Queens. (R) **6.35** Freeride World Tour. **7.05** The Grid. **7.30** MSA British Rally Championship. **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.30** Formula 1: Chinese Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights. **2.00** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ayr and Newbury. **4.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. **5.30** Homes by the Sea. **6.30** Channel 4 News. **7.00** **Film: Ender's Game.** (2013) Premiere. In the future, the human race has survived conflict with an alien race, but the prospect of war breaking out again is a constant threat. A gifted boy is selected as a potential military commander for the coming conflict, and subjected to a grueling training program to prove his worth. Sci-fi adventure based on Orson Scott Card's novel, starring Asa Butterfield, Harrison Ford and Ben Kingsley. **9.15** **Film: Die Hard 2.** (1990) Tough cop John McClane arrives at an airport to pick up his wife, but finds himself plunged into a bloody life-or-death struggle. He must battle terrorists who have seized control of the terminal as part of a campaign to secure the release of a convicted drug baron. Action thriller sequel, starring Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, Franco Nero and William Atherton. **11.40** **Jimmy Carr: Laughing & Joking.** Stand-up comedy with the host of 8 Out of 10 Cats, recorded at London's Hammersmith Apollo in November last year, featuring his familiar brand of near-the-knuckle humour. (R) **12.35** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. The chef helps the owners of Jack's Waterfront, Michigan. (R) **1.30** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Trevor demands Ste and Harry start paying their way. Nico worries Sienna has remembered everything, and Louis books a romantic getaway. (R) **3.40** Kirstie's Handmade Treasures. Flower arranging at the Royal Cornwall Show. (R) **4.00** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. Three homeowners in Luton compete to sell their homes. **4.55** Location, Location, Location. Two couples in Gloucestershire search for properties to reflect their new lifestyles. (R) **5.50** The King of Queens. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **9.30** The Saturday Show Live. **11.30** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud 2. (R) **12.25** Puppies Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **1.25** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **2.25** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **3.20** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **4.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **6.10** **NCIS: Los Angeles.** A rocket engine expert is killed, leaving Eric to go undercover to ensure that classified technology remains secure. **7.05** **NCIS: New Orleans.** A man is killed during a city-wide blackout, and the team suspects his death is connected to the activities of opportunist thieves using the power cut as cover for a looting spree. **8.00** **NCIS.** DiNozzo, Bishop and her husband investigate a terrorist threat while they are stuck at Washington Dulles airport during bad weather at Thanksgiving weekend. **8.55** 5 News Weekend. **9.00** **The Championship: Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's matches from the Championship, including Birmingham City v Burnley at St Andrew's, and Sheffield Wednesday v Ipswich Town at Hillsborough. Plus, a round-up of all the goals, the main talking points, and interviews with a selection of players and managers. **10.00** **Goal Rush: Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present a round-up of the latest matches in League One and League Two, including Burton Albion v Barnsley, and Accrington Stanley v Morecambe. **10.30** **NCIS: Greatest Ever Episodes.** Part two of two. Gibbs continues to blame himself for Kate's death, and enlists Jenny's help to track down Ari – but they are nearly killed in a shoot-out. (R) **11.25** **NCIS: Greatest Ever Episodes.** The entombed body of a Marine sergeant is found, with evidence indicating he was buried alive. Meanwhile, Ziva David returns to replace Kate. (R) **12.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 A History of Ancient Britain **8.00** Human Planet **9.00** Follow the Money **11.00** Dusty Springfield at the BBC **12.00** Definitely Dusty **1.00** Queens of Soul **2.00** Classic Soul at the BBC **3.00** Dusty Springfield at the BBC **4.00** Close

ITV4

11.00 Britain's Got Talent **12.25** Britain's Got More Talent **1.30** The Almost Impossible Gameshow **2.30** Scorpion **3.30** Film: Small Soldiers (1998) **4.35** FYI Daily **4.40** Film: Small Soldiers (1998) **5.40** Film: Scooby-Doo (2002) **6.55** FYI Daily **7.00** Film: Scooby-Doo (2002) **7.30** Film: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **8.30** FYI Daily **8.35** Film: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **9.20** Britain's Got More Talent **10.25** Celebrity Juice **11.10** Family Guy **12.40** American Dad! **1.35** The Cleveland Show **2.25** @elevenish **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3**

1.55 Inspector Morse **6.20** Film: Lumbos: Lady in Waiting (1971) **8.00** Foyle's War **10.00** Lewis **12.00** Blue Murder **1.30** Doctor at Large **2.10** ITV3 Nightscreen **3.10** Teleshopping **ITV4**

11.45 Film: The Far Country (1954) **12.45** Film: The Secret War of Harry Frigg (1967) **1.50** FYI Daily **1.55** Film: The Secret War of Harry Frigg (1967) **3.00** British Superbike Championship Highlights **4.00** Film: Goldfinger (1964) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10** Film: Goldfinger (1964) **6.20** The Boxing Mavericks **7.20** The Big Fish Off **8.20** Film: Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) **9.25** FYI Daily **9.30** Film: Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) **10.00** Film: Out for Justice (1991) **11.05** FYI Daily **11.10** Film: Out for Justice (1991) **11.55** Film: The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford (2007) **1.00** FYI Daily **1.05** Film: The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford (2007) **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4**

1.30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.30** The Goldbergs **4.00** Film: Bride Wars (2009) **5.45** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Get Him to the Greek (2010) **11.10** Gogglebox **12.50** Rude Tube **1.55** The IT Crowd **2.50** How I Met Your Mother **3.35** Gogglebox **Film4**

1.00 Cleeves (1995) **3.00** A Monster in Paris (2011) **4.45** Imagine That (2009) **6.55** One Day (2011) **9.00** Faster (2010) **10.55** Fright Night (1985) **1.05** Nosferatu the Vampire (1979) **3.20** Close

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CHOICE



Paul McCartney with Downton Abbey's Jim Carter
Jim Carter: Lonnie Donegan And Me (ITV, 10.20pm)
The Downton Abbey star examines the influence of the 1950s singer, who released six number one singles at the height of the skiffle craze and was cited by John Lennon and Paul McCartney as a major influence in writing their own songs. Carter remembers how he saw the singer perform at a seaside variety show when he was 11, and discovers the origins of skiffle music, revealing how Donegan was introduced to American folk music during national service. Featuring 1950s archive footage and interviews with some of the acclaimed musicians who were inspired by Donegan's music.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 7.35 Match of the Day. (R) **9.00 The Andrew Marr Show.** **10.00 The Big Questions.** **11.00 Regional Programme.** **12.15 Bargain Hunt.** (R) **1.00 BBC News.** Weather. **1.15 Homes Under the Hammer.** (R) **2.15 Flog It!** (R) **3.15 Escape to the Country.** (R) **4.00 Points of View.** **4.15 LifeLine.** **4.25 Songs of Praise.** **5.00 Life in the Air.**
6.00 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army and Me. Paul goes to Athens to assist with the migrant crisis. He also meets the leader of the charity and poses some hard questions, and helps a woman struggling to feed her children.
6.30 BBC News.
6.50 Regional Programme.
7.00 Countryfile. Joe Crowley and Anita Rani visit Dumfries and Galloway. Joe meets a cattle farmer trying to restore the popularity of a famous local breed, while Anita joins a photographer looking for wildlife at night and meets a group of volunteers planting trees in the mountains. Sean Fletcher helps out with restoration work at a medieval building in the Peak District. Adam Henson meets another nominee for Countryfile's Farming Hero, and Tom Heap investigates whether 2016 will be a hard year for farmers. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.
8.00 Antiques Roadshow. The team values more rarities at Hanbury Hall, Droitwich. Items featured include a jacket designed by Peter Blake, a nude painting and a sketch of Napoleon on his deathbed.
9.00 Undercover. Maya resumes her legal struggle with the US authorities, leading to a revelation that rocks her marriage to the core. Nick is confronted with a ghost from his past.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Regional Programme.
10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action.
11.40 Room 101 - Extra Storage. Extended version in which Frank Skinner invites Strictly head judge Len Goodman, actress and impressionist Ronni Ancona and quick-witted comic Tim Vine to discuss their pet hates. (R)
12.20 Snooker: World Championship Extra. **3.20 Snooker Classic Matches.** **4.20 Weather for the Week Ahead.**

BBC2

6.30 This Farming Life. (R) **7.30 Gardeners' World.** (R) **8.00 An Island Parish.** (R) **8.30 The Beechgrove Garden.** **9.00 Countryfile.** (R) **10.00 Live Snooker: The World Championship.** **12.15 MOTD Extra.** **1.00 Live Snooker: The World Championship.** Coverage of the second session on the second day.
6.00 Jungle Animal Hospital: Natural World. The work of dedicated staff at an animal hospital in Guatemala, whose wards are full of exotic patients, many of them orphans rescued from the illegal pet trade. The film follows the team in their busiest year yet as they nurse the animals back to health, select a troop of spider monkeys for release and prepare a flock of precious scarlet macaws for freedom. (R)
7.00 Jumbo: The Plane That Changed the World. Documentary examining the origins and development of the Boeing 747, which was the world's first wide-bodied commercial airliner and revolutionised air travel after coming into service in 1970. In interviews filmed on the original prototype, chief engineer Joe Sutter and his team describe the challenges they faced, from exploding engines to vibrations that threatened to tear the aircraft apart, and test pilot Brien Wygle reveals how on the first flight they hooked up car batteries as back-ups in case of engine failure. (R)
8.00 Natural Born Winners. The athletes move on to India, where they are introduced to Kalaripayattu, a fighting style with a range of acrobatic moves and weapons that is considered the root of martial arts.
9.00 Horizon: Should We Close Our Zoos? Liz Bonnin reports on issues concerning zoos, exploring their role in preserving endangered species.
10.00 Film: The Spectacular Now. (2013) Premiere. A teenage loner bonds with a drunken classmate who helps her create a new persona for herself to boost her confidence. Drama, starring Miles Teller and Shailene Woodley.
11.30 Snooker: The World Championship. **12.20 The People v OJ Simpson: American Crime Story.** (R) **1.05 Sign Zone: Countryfile.** (R) **2.05 Holby City.** (R) **3.00 This is BBC Two.**

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knockout Street. **6.15 Bottom Knockout Street.** (R) **6.25 Pat & Stan.** (R) **6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **6.45 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story.** (R) **7.05 Sooty.** (R) **7.15 Super 4.** (R) **7.30 Needs & Monsters.** (R) **7.45 The Tom & Jerry Show.** (R) **8.00 Teen Titans Go!** (R) **8.25 ITV News.** **8.30 Weekend.** **9.25 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **10.20 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **11.20 The Jeremy Kyle Show.** (R) **12.25 ITV News: Weather.** **12.30 The Jeremy Kyle Show.** (R) **1.30 River Monsters.** (R) **2.35 Big Star's Little Star.** (R) **3.35 Britain's Got Talent.** (R) **5.00 Tipping Point.** (R)
6.00 All Star Family Fortunes. Opera singer Paul Potts and former MP Ann Widdecombe team up with their families in an attempt to win money for charity. Game show, hosted by Vernon Kay. (R)
6.35 Regional Programme: Weather. **6.45 ITV News: Weather.**
7.00 The Chase Celebrity Special. Shane Williams, Sair Khan, Milton Jones and Tanni Grey-Thompson work as a team to take on quiz genius the Chaser and secure a cash prize for charity.
8.00 The Durrells. Margo takes pride in her new job, but soon discovers where her greatest talent lies. Gerry and Leslie's social lives leave Louise wondering if she made a mistake coming to Corfu.
9.00 Home Fires. The Czech officers organise a dance to keep morale up as the Battle of Britain intensifies. Joyce has some advice for Sarah which is not well-received, while Pat realises that somebody knows about her relationship with Marek. Allison's secret work for the police leaves her forced to decide where her loyalties lie. Steph fears that Stan is becoming a bad influence on his son, and Frances finds out that Peter's affair was more complicated than she thought.
10.05 ITV News: Weather.
10.20 Jim Carter: Lonnie Donegan And Me. The Downton Abbey star examines the influence of the 1950s singer on pop music. He discovers the origins of skiffle music and recalls his own experiences of seeing Donegan perform.
11.25 Premiership Rugby Union. **12.15 Jackpot247.** **3.00 British Superbike Championship Highlights.**

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40 The King of Queens.** (R) **7.05 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD.** **8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.30 Sunday Brunch.** **1.30 Formula 1: Chinese Grand Prix Highlights.** **3.30 Location, Location, Location.** (R) **4.30 A Place in the Sun: Home or Away.** **5.30 Channel 4 News.**
6.00 Grand Designs: Living in the Country. Kevin McCloud looks at the challenges of self-building in the countryside, where design must embrace and enhance tradition, yet often overcome stringent planning constraints. Drawing on footage from the show's 15-year history, as well as new visits to extraordinary homes, he finds out how pioneers at the forefront of architecture are transforming agricultural and historic buildings, and bringing cutting-edge contemporary design to rural parts. (R)
7.00 The Fearless Chef. New series. Chef and restaurateur Kiran Jethwa goes on a culinary world tour, tracing ingredients to their source and preparing meals in unusual locations. His travels begin in Bolivia, where he goes in search of coca leaves, which can be used as a herb in tea and cooking. He meets some local farmers and harvests the leaves on sheer valley slopes, before using his crop to make a marinade for llama meat.
8.00 Hidden Britain by Drone. Part two of two. Tony Robinson presents aerial footage of a shipyard where aircraft carriers are built and a shipwreck on the Kent coast that is filled with explosives.
9.00 Indian Summers. Aaftrin tries to prevent a bombing during Simla's silver jubilee celebrations without exposing his own secrets, but by enlisting Soon's help, he places her life in danger.
10.00 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.05 Film: Mud. (2012) Premiere. Two boys find a fugitive hiding out on an island on the Mississippi and help reunite him with his lost love. Drama, starring Matthew McConaughey.
1.05 Embarrassing Bodies Down Under. (R) **1.55 Come Dine with Me.** (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05 Bananas in Pyjamas.** (R) **6.20 Angelina Ballerina.** (R) **6.35 Bob the Builder.** (R) **6.45 Ticky Toc.** (R) **6.55 Zack and Quack.** (R) **7.10 Roodbarb and Custard Too.** (R) **7.15 Make Way for Noddy.** (R) **7.30 Paw Patrol.** (R) **7.45 Little Princess.** (R) **7.55 Pip Ahoy!** (R) **8.05 Blaze and the Monster Machines.** (R) **8.35 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom.** (R) **8.50 Wanda and the Alien.** (R) **9.05 Toby's Travelling Circus.** (R) **9.20 Jelly Jam.** (R) **9.35 LazyTown.** (R) **10.05 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** **10.40 The Championship: Football League Tonight.** (R) **11.40 Goal Rush: Football League Tonight.** (R) **12.15 The Gadgets Show.** (R) **1.15 Film: The Princess Bride.** (1987) Comic fantasy adventure, starring Cary Elwes. **3.15 Film: Bend It Like Beckham.** (2002) Comedy, starring Parminder Nagra and Keira Knightley. **5.30 Film: Hercules.** (1997) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Tate Donovan.
7.10 New That's Funny! A collection of internet-sourced videos with a family friendly hook, featuring laugh-out-loud unexpected personal moments now being shared with the world.
8.00 Penn & Teller: Fool Us in Vegas. An award-winning magician performs one of his favourite routines, the president of the Yale University Magic Club asks Jonathan Ross to assist with a card trick, and an Australian illusionist tries to dazzle Penn and Teller. The duo conclude the show with their own take on pulling a rabbit out of a hat.
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Film: Going the Distance. (2010) Premiere. A woman from San Francisco falls in love with a man she meets while spending a summer in New York. When the time comes for her to return home, they decide to try to keep their relationship going, despite being on opposite sides of America. However, their friends become convinced their efforts are doomed to failure. Romantic comedy, starring Drew Barrymore.
11.05 Film: Mars Attacks! (1996) The inhabitants of Earth scramble to repel an invasion by a seemingly invincible Martian army. Tim Burton's sci-fi comedy, starring Jack Nicholson.
1.05 SuperCasino. **3.10 The Tube: Going Underground.** (R) **4.00 Wildlife SOS.** (R) **4.50 Great Artists.** (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Trad Jazz Britannia. **8.00 Film: Rock Around the Clock** (1956) **9.15 Rock 'n' Roll America** **12.15 Natural World: Tiger Island** **1.15 Rich Hall's California Stars** **2.45 Jerusalem: The Making of a Holy City** **3.45 Close**
ITV2
12.00 Take Me Out **1.10 Catchphrase** **1.55 Film: Scooby-Doo** (2002) **2.55 FYI Daily** **3.00 Film: Scooby-Doo** (2002) **3.45 Film: Hotel Transylvania** (2012) **4.50 FYI Daily** **4.55 Film: Hotel Transylvania** (2012) **5.35 Britain's Got Talent** **7.00 Britain's Got More Talent** **8.00 Film: After Earth** (2013) **9.00 FYI Daily** **9.05 Film: After Earth** (2013) **10.00 Family Guy** **11.55 American Dad!** **12.55 The Cleveland Show** **1.50 Total Bonkers Guinness World Records** **2.15 The Hot Desk: Real East** **2.25 Teleshopping** **5.55 ITV2 Nightscreen**
ITV3
11.30 Film: Columbo: Lady in Waiting (1971) **1.10 Film: Black Beauty** (1994) **2.10 FYI Daily** **2.15 Film: Black Beauty** (1994) **3.00 Agatha Christie's Marple** **5.00 Midsomer Murders** **7.00 Doc Martin** **8.00 The Cruise Ship** **8.30 Royal Stories** **9.00 Great Estates of Scotland** **10.10 Film: The Queen** (2006) **11.10 FYI Daily** **11.15 Film: The Queen** (2006) **12.20 Inspector Morse** **2.20 Wycliffe** **3.15 May the Best House Win** **4.55 On the Buses** **5.20 Judge Judy** **5.45 ITV3 Nightscreen**
ITV4
6.15 Football's Greatest: George Best **6.30 Pawn Stars** **6.55 The Wine Show** **8.00 Premiership Rugby Union** **9.00 Film: Ransom** (1996) **10.05 FYI Daily** **10.10 Film: Ransom** (1996) **11.25 Film: How I Spent My Summer Vacation** (2012) **12.30 FYI Daily** **12.35 Film: How I Spent My Summer Vacation** (2012) **1.20 Hell on Wheels** **2.20 Storage Wars: New York** **2.45 ITV4 Nightscreen** **3.00 Teleshopping**
E4
12.30 Made in Chelsea **1.30 Couples Come Dine with Me** **2.30 The Goldbergs** **3.55 Film: Dear John** (2010) **6.00 The Big Bang Theory** **9.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD** **10.00 Tattoo Fixers** **11.00 The IT Crowd** **12.05 The Aliens** **1.10 The 100** **2.10 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD** **2.55 Tattoo Fixers** **3.50 Hollywood**
Film4
11.00 Escape from the Planet of the Apes (1971) **1.00 Brewster's Millions** (1985) **3.05 City of Ember** (2008) **4.55 Marley and Me** (2008) **7.10 Legend** (1985) **9.00 Now You See Me** (2013) **11.15 Friday the 13th** (2009) **1.10 Room** (2012)

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Dangerous Company, Channel 5, 3.20pm

A businesswoman worries she has dementia after becoming forgetful – but something more sinister is at play. Thriller, starring Alicia Leigh Willis. Edited for daytime broadcast. (2015)

TUESDAY

Secrets of Eden, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A detective investigates the deaths of a couple, and becomes convinced the local pastor may be implicated in the tragedy. Drama, starring John Stamos and Anna Gunn. (2012)

WEDNESDAY

Along Came Polly, ITV, 10.45pm

An obsessively cautious man, whose wife left him on their honeymoon, crosses paths with a wildly spontaneous former classmate who throws his well-ordered routine into disarray. Yet in spite of their different outlooks on life, he starts to fall for her. Romantic comedy, starring Ben Stiller, Jennifer Aniston and Philip Seymour Hoffman. (2004)



GoldenEye, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

THURSDAY

The Husband She Met Online, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman turns to the internet for romance after breaking up with her unfaithful boyfriend. She thinks she has found the perfect man in the wealthy, charming head of a real-estate company, but soon comes to realise he has an obsessive nature and intends to take control of her life. Thriller, starring Meredith Monroe and Jason Gray-Stanford. (2013)

FRIDAY

The Good Mother, Channel 5, 3.20pm

A troubled teenager is taken in by a kind family, but suspects the mother has murdered her daughter and intends to kill again. Thriller, with Helen Slater. (2013)

GoldenEye, ITV, 10.40pm

James Bond heads for Russia to investigate the connection between the theft of an experimental helicopter and an orbital satellite weapon with the power to devastate entire cities. He discovers both have fallen into the hands of a criminal mastermind. Spy adventure, with Pierce Brosnan. (1995)

An unwelcome surprise is in store for Murray

Ben Miller has been giving his old comedy partner Alexander Armstrong a run for his money in the ubiquity stakes recently.

In February, the former Death in Paradise star returned to his scientific roots (he abandoned a PhD in solid state physics at Cambridge University to concentrate on comedy) by presenting the ITV series *It's Not Rocket Science*.

And now he's back on the BBC with the new sitcom *I Want My Wife Back*, which could probably also be counted as a return to familiar ground.

The sitcom is written and produced by Mark Russell and Justin Sresni, who previously collaborated with Ben on another comedy with a seemingly self-explanatory title, *The Worst Week of My Life*.

The first series, which aired in 2004, followed publishing executive Howard Steel during the run-up to his wedding, when he found himself plagued by everything from an obsessive ex to a hospitalised grandmother. It was followed by a

second series and festive special, entitled (wait for it!) *The Worst Christmas of My Life*.

However, as you may have already deduced, *I Want My Wife Back* follows a man whose main concern isn't making it to the church on time but staying out of the divorce court.

Ben stars as Murray, a seemingly happily married man who in this opening episode is in busy arranging a surprise 40th birthday party for his beloved wife Bex (Doc Martin's Caroline Catz, who knows a thing or two about playing long-suffering other halves). But it turns out that he's the one in for a shock when he hears that she's planning to leave him. He desperately tries to find her before the party, and is devastated when she confirms that she really is going.

So, naturally he tries to cancel the bash, only to find it's too late. As the guests begin to arrive, a shell-shocked Murray and Bex struggle to put on a brave face, and things get even worse when someone springs

another very awkward birthday surprise.

Murray's heartbreak may not initially sound all that hilarious, but events will become increasingly farcical. Future episodes will see Murray try to find out exactly why Bex has left him and what he can do to win her back, and his friends, family and colleagues are only too ready to offer their well-meaning, if not always helpful, advice.

And while Murray may be struggling, Ben is definitely having a good time. He says: "I feel incredibly lucky to be back in the BBC comedy fold, playing the incredibly unlucky hero of *I Want My Wife Back*. With *Mainstreet* at the helm and Mark Russell and Justin Sresni on script, this truly feels like a match made in heaven."

Commissioning editor Chris Sussman adds: "It's a very modern farce with a great cast, and I can't wait to see it on TV. The writers do a brilliant job of putting Ben Miller down a hole and then watching him painfully trying to crawl his way out..."



Ben Miller stars in *I Want My Wife Back*, Monday, BBC1, 9.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

The Hairy Bikers' Pubs That Built Britain BBC2, 6.30pm

Si King and Dave Myers are setting out on a pub crawl with a difference in this new series. Instead of just propping up bars around the country, they'll be unearthing hundreds of years of fascinating history hidden in Britain's public houses, beginning in Yorkshire. They visit an establishment believed to have been drunk dry by troops the night before the Battle of Marston Moor during the English Civil War, while in York they learn about a pub that once doubled as a hospital and has a gruesome history.

TUESDAY

Fierce ITV, 8pm

He's become a famous face thanks to his BBC shows, but Steve Backshall is journeying to 'the other side' for this six-part new series. In the past, Backshall has proved himself to be a fearless adventurer, somebody who will stop at nothing to explore weird and wonderful wildernesses while getting up close and personal with a variety of creatures. He does the same here – and dices with the death in the process. As the title suggests, the idea is for him to showcase the world's most vicious animals – by meeting them face-to-face. Among the

highlights will be Backshall's efforts to track down the endangered giant river otter, as well as encounters with the giant black caiman, komodo dragons and the fearless honey badger.

WEDNESDAY

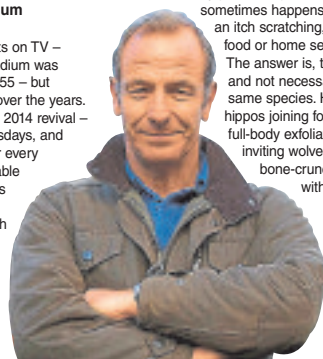
Tonight at the London Palladium ITV, 8pm

It may be one of the oldest formats on TV – Sunday Night at the London Palladium was first shown on ITV way back in 1955 – but it has undergone some changes over the years. In fact, it's even changed since its 2014 revival – the show has now moved to Thursdays, and instead of having a new presenter every week, it's been placed in the capable hands of Bradley Walsh. He brings his old-school light entertainment charm to this week's edition, which sees Cyndi Lauper and the cast of the musical *Kinky Boots* taking to the stage alongside Diversity, Ronan Keating, Troupe Diabolo, and The Royal British Legion Band and Corps of Drums. Romford. If that wasn't eclectic enough, there's also comedy from Seann Walsh.

THURSDAY

Nature's Perfect Partners: Natural World BBC2, 8pm

Bill Bailey narrates this natural history documentary telling the story of some of nature's most extraordinary partnerships, revealing what sometimes happens when animals need an itch scratching, help getting into food or home security assistance. The answer is, to find a partner – and not necessarily one of the same species. Highlights include hippos joining forces with fish for a full-body exfoliation and ravens inviting wolverines over for some bone-crunching assistance with their dinner.



Flying Scotsman with Robson Green, Friday, ITV, 9pm

FRIDAY

Bargaining Round Britain with John Sergeant ITV, 8pm

New series. The broadcaster returns to travel more of Britain's canal network,

exploring the extraordinary stories of the people and places on the way. The series starts with John navigating the Peak Forest Canal, which runs through stunning countryside from Buxworth in Derbyshire to Ashton-under-Lyne. Along the way, in Hyde he meets former boxer Ricky Hatton, who discusses his plans to revitalise the area and offer new opportunities to local youngsters, and joins a team of junior archaeologists at Mellor Mill, who are attempting to unearth the remains of what was once one of the world's largest mills.

Flying Scotsman with Robson Green ITV, 9pm

The actor tells the story of the world's most famous steam locomotive, joining the team of craftsman responsible for its restoration and revealing the astonishing story behind its rebirth. Last year, the engine was lying in pieces in a workshop just outside Manchester where a team of engineers used traditional skills to restore the icon to its former glory. Not only will Robson tell the story of its restoration from the hub of the workshop, the Grantchester star also gets involved in the rebuild, meets the men and women responsible for it, and is present to witness the milestones in its reconstruction. And if he's lucky he might even get to fulfil a boyhood dream and ride on its footplate.

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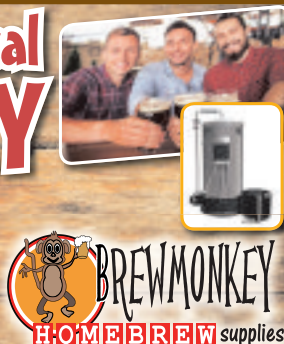
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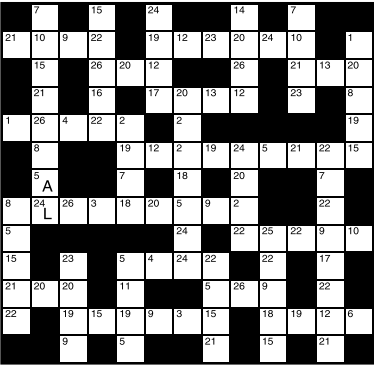


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BRAIN GYM No.373

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

T	A	F	C	P	U	K	J	Y	W	N	V	S
I	R	Q	E	M	D	O	G	Z	B	L	H	X

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

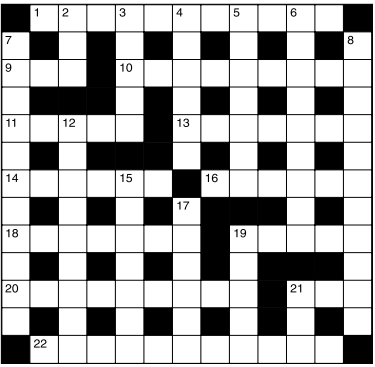
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- 1. It's not only cattle traders who deal here (5-6)
- 9. Tombstone inscription will produce a tear! (3)
- 10. Likely to cause ill-feeling (9)
- 11. Shows deficiencies - in need of tightening up, we hear (5)
- 13. What the referee needs when it comes to blows! (7)
- 14. Discovers how low noises are (6)
- 16. A wheel cover, we hear, is something that people can put on themselves (6)
- 18. Chemical charge after dark, by the sound of it (7)
- 19. Settle and make a fire (5)
- 20. He notes the proceedings minute by minute (9)
- 21. In the freight a residual coal product (3)
- 22. Suffering from cardiac arteriosclerosis? (4-7)

Down

- 2. It whirls round the summit (3)
- 3. Irons a suit (5)
- 4. Red Indian doctor getting the bird! (6)
- 5. For the practical man art lies in ruins (7)
- 6. Providing a certain name is giving one a claim (9)
- 7. Absence of works of creative imagination will show naivety (11)
- 8. Classify crossword compilers as experts in letter arrangements! (4-7)
- 12. Shellfish could act as cure (9)
- 15. The road to the cemetery, maybe! (4-3)
- 17. Just the word to open with (6)
- 19. A bed to propagate shoots (5)
- 21. It's used by the driver for ball bearing (3)



Quick Clues:

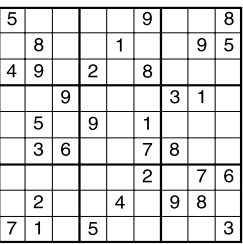
Across

- 1. Own (11)
- 9. Place (3)
- 10. Watchfulness (9)
- 11. Happen again (5)
- 13. Attire (7)
- 14. Chastise (6)
- 16. Thrashed (6)
- 18. Fancy (7)
- 19. Military student (5)
- 20. Fruit (9)
- 21. Brown (3)
- 22. Handed down as custom (11)

Down

- 2. Sever (3)
- 3. At no time (5)
- 4. Native American tent (6)
- 5. Outshine (7)
- 6. Produced (9)
- 7. Suitable (11)
- 8. High boots (11)
- 12. Receptacle (9)
- 15. Clergyman's salary (7)
- 17. Cease (6)
- 19. Creed (5)
- 21. Beverage (3)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	9	5	7	3	2	4	6	8
3	2	8	1	6	4	7	5	9
7	6	4	9	5	8	1	2	3
8	4	6	2	7	1	3	9	5
5	7	1	8	9	3	6	4	2
9	3	2	5	4	6	8	1	7
6	8	9	4	2	7	5	3	1
4	5	7	3	1	9	2	8	6
2	1	3	6	8	5	9	7	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Robs; 3 Encamped; 9 Learner; 10 Trade; 11 Gooseberries; 13 Onsets; 15 Thrush; 17 Dark thoughts; 20 Aspen; 21 Inhuman; 22 Finished; 23 Trot. Down: 1 Religion; 2 Bravo; 4 Nurses; 5 Afterthought; 6 Plateau; 7 Duet; 8 Undertakings; 12 Chestnut; 14 Sharpen; 16 Thrive; 18 Homer; 19 Calif. QUICK - Across: 1 Such; 3 Astonish; 9 Amateur; 10 Comic; 11 Discomposure; 13 Recess; 15 Cohere; 17 Overstrained; 20 Again; 21 Collide; 22 Skeleton; 23 News. Down: 1 Standard; 2 Grass; 4 Scrape; 5 Occasionally; 6 Immerse; 7 Hack; 8 Remonstrance; 12 Headless; 14 Caviar; 16 Stucco; 18 Noise; 19 Pass.

Quiz

- 1. Which international cricket team has been captained by Kepler Wessels?
- 2. What do the letters HRT stand for?
- 3. Which country is called Hanguk in its native language?
- 4. What is the Severn bore?
- 5. For what is the Spanish city Jerez de la Frontera famous?
- 6. What is the title of the Marquess of Blandford's father?
- 7. In which year was the Thames barrier completed?
- 8. What is the common name of the fruit Citrus reticulata?
- 9. How is author Samuel Langhorne Clemens better known?
- 10. Which king had to deal with the Peasants Revolt of 1381?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Jupiter; 2 Northern Lights; 3 Dinah
Sheridan; 4 Diphtheria; 5 Iron; 6 Zaire;
7 Bronze Age; 8 Seve Ballesteros; 9 The Raven; 10 Edinburgh.
Niner: RELOADING

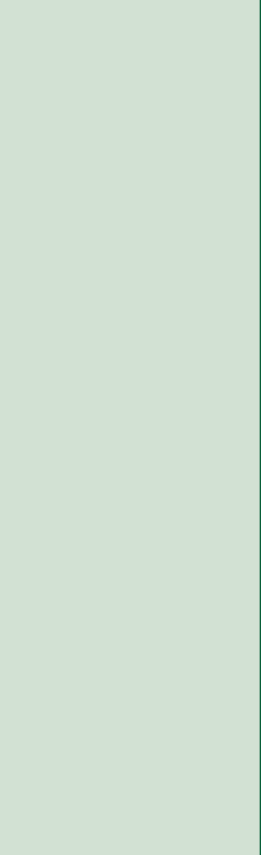
Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

3856145 gives a seaman,
794567 gives a churchman,
521145 gives an athlete.



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Serving up taste of Spain

New restaurant owner Imran Iqbal has that extra helping of enthusiasm and it is paying off, as MARK SHIPP finds out

TAKE an empty shop unit, add a touch of ambition, sprinkle in some themed decor and mix together with genuine Spanish fare.

Top it all off with a chef from Barcelona and you have a taste of Spain in one small corner of Walsall.

It might be one 'el' of a gamble but owner Imran Iqbal believes it is one worth taking.

For many years, Imran has set his sights on opening a Spanish-themed restaurant and has this year finally seen his vision realised.

Extensive research in his home town led Imran to believe such a concept was needed. He and business partner Azhar Nawaz visited Spain to learn about its culture, its food and its influences, and, after deciding it would be a success, even recruited chef Asad.

He's from Barcelona.

And he has 14 years experience working for a five-star hotel in the Catalan city.

Flamenco

The venue in Goodall Street, a former bar, was not Imran's first choice, but this hidden gem is well-worth seeking out.

It is tastefully decorated to give it an authentic Spanish feel – and all Imran's own work. In fact, we half expected to be serenaded by a woman in flamenco dress playing the castanets.

The menu offers a range of tapas dishes, as well as pizza and salads, pasta, paella and risotto, even steaks and burgers and has an added desi fusion.

We chose a starter, ensalade feta tomate – that's tomato and feta salad, which we shared, but left it until our mains as the perfect accompaniment. Our mains choices were canelloni



Empty shop unit transformed to bring a taste of Spain to one small corner of Walsall



Spanish theme throughout the tastefully-decorated interior

rossini for the better half and risotto de pollo for myself, topped with parmesan cheese, succulently creamy and with a not-too-overpowering hint of pepper.

Arriba means fast in Spanish so the name Ba Ba Reebea was chosen as a play on words to associate with quick service. It was not rapid, we discovered, but the best things come to those who wait in my book, so that was not a problem.

What's more, we were equipped with a de-

vice that could order drinks or call the staff from the comfort of our own table. Unfortunately, that does not include alcohol, though unique 'halal' non-alcoholic wines are served.

Despite demolishing my own dessert, the delicious crema catalana, I spent most of the time drooling over my other half's crepes, which came with ice cream and drizzled in strawberry sauce, so both of those come highly recommended. The former is akin to creme brulee with a hard sticky piece of cara-

mel in the middle. Gorgeous. Ba Ba Reebea is not guaranteed to take off, but it deserves to, particularly if passion was any guarantee of success, as Imran has that in abundance and is determined to make it work. The food is a good start as it was delightful.

I agree there is a need for such a restaurant locally. However, the lack of alcohol could prove to be a stumbling block.

A drop of sangria certainly wouldn't go amiss with a bowl of paella or risotto, but that

shouldn't put people off either, so it remains to be seen what others make of it. Early feedback is certainly promising with many positive remarks on online review pages.

Ba Ba Reebea caters for 50 diners. It is open for lunch from noon to 2pm and from 5-11pm Sunday to Thursday, on Friday from 5pm to midnight on Friday and on Saturday from noon to 2pm and 5pm to midnight.

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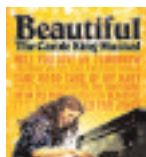
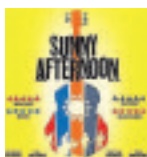
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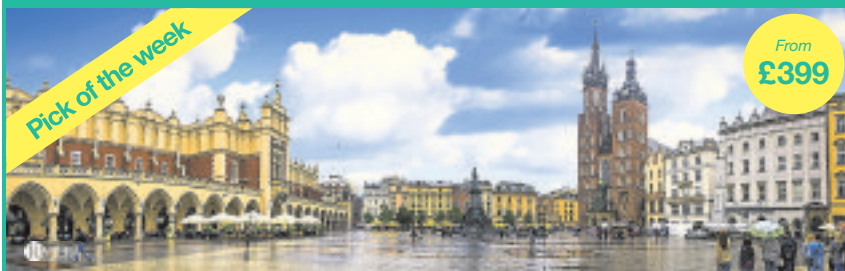


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- ✓ Visit to the Wawel castle district
- ✓ Visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau
- ✓ Optional tour to the Salt Mines
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

Without doubt one of the most beautiful cities, ranking with Prague and Vienna, Krakow is one of the real architectural gems of central Europe

The city houses over 6,000 historic buildings and monuments, 18 museums, 2.5 million works of art and over 140 churches - in fact its historic centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

During the walking tour see the amazing Rynek, the main square, lined with exquisite medieval buildings. The Cloth Hall in the centre was originally used for textile trading, today it is full of small stalls selling locally-made amber jewellery and an art gallery.

There will be a host of other sights to take in on the tour too, including St Mary's church, the Florian Gate, the University and Collegium.

A visit is made to the Wawel Castle District, which was the political and cultural capital of Poland for over 500 years. See the cathedral, tour the Palace and Royal chambers and explore the rest of the complex including the three-tiered Renaissance courtyard.

The guided tour of Auschwitz, nearby Birkenau and the notorious watchtower will be extremely moving, and therefore this excursion although included, is not compulsory.

An optional tour to the famous Salt Mines is also offered.

DAYS: 4 DEPARTS: Various dates



Sunday Night London Theatre Go as you please

From
£119⁹⁵

- ✓ Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation at a choice of four-star London hotels (Option to stay on the Saturday night too for £69.95 extra per person)
- ✓ Top price ticket for a Sunday evening performance of Jersey Boys, Stomp or Thriller Live
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)

DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: Various dates



Kew Gardens Tree Tops Walk and Hampton Court

From
£139

- ✓ Return coach travel
- ✓ Overnight half-board accommodation
- ✓ Entrance to Kew Gardens and Rhizotron and Xstrata Treetop walkway
- ✓ Entrance to Hampton Court Palace, gardens and maze
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: June 18



Jersey — Free night offer*

From
£269

- ✓ Return flights from Manchester or Birmingham
- ✓ Bed and breakfast accommodation at the three-star Mayfair Hotel in St Helier
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- ✓ Return transfers from the airport in Jersey
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)
- ✓ *Free night offers for departures up to October 31, 2016, e.g. four nights for the price of three (conditions apply)

Organised by Modern Hotels (ABTA V3101, ATOL 0752)

DAYS: 4 TO 8 DEPARTS: Various



Spanish Riding School of Vienna 450th Anniversary

From
£139

- ✓ Return coach travel
- ✓ Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- ✓ Ticket to see The Spanish Riding School of Vienna at Wembley Arena (upgrades offered)
- ✓ Short panoramic sightseeing tour of London
- ✓ Visit to central London for shopping and sightseeing
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V787X)

DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: November 13



André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra in Nottingham

From
£195

- ✓ Return coach travel
- ✓ Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation in the East Midlands area
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- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V787X)

DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: December 17



Isle of Wight and Osborne House

From
£189

- ✓ Return coach travel and ferry crossings
- ✓ Two nights half-board accommodation
- ✓ Entrance to Osborne House and Queen Victoria's private beach
- ✓ Visits to Yarmouth, Alum Bay, Godshill, Newport and Ryde
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

DAYS: 3 DEPARTS: September 29



Chelsea Flower Show

From
£199⁹⁵

- ✓ Return coach travel
- ✓ Overnight half-board accommodation
- ✓ Admission to the Chelsea Flower Show
- ✓ Stop at a place of interest en route to the hotel
- ✓ Services of a coach driver/tour representative
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4782)

DAYS: 2 DEPARTS: May 27



Buckingham Palace the Houses of Parliament and the London Eye

From
£289

- ✓ Return coach travel
- ✓ Three nights half-board accommodation
- ✓ Entrance to Buckingham Palace
- ✓ Entrance and guided tour of the Houses of Parliament
- ✓ Flight on the London Eye
- ✓ Free time in London
- ✓ Visits to Royal Windsor and Henley-on-Thames
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

DAYS: 4 DEPARTS: Aug 12, Sept 2



Heidelberg, Main Valley and the Romantic Road

From
£749

- ✓ Return flights
- ✓ Five nights half-board accommodation
- ✓ Guided tours of Heidelberg and Bamberg
- ✓ Journey along the Romantic Road to Rothenburg
- ✓ Entrance and tour of Würzburg Residenz
- ✓ Visits to Miltenberg and Wertheim
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

DAYS: 6 DEPARTS: Various dates



The Italian Lakes

From
£729

- ✓ Return flights
- ✓ Seven nights half-board accommodation, four on Lake Maggiore and three on Lake Garda
- ✓ Guided tour of Lake Maggiore and the Borromean Islands
- ✓ Day exploring Lake Como
- ✓ Full-day tour of Lake Garda
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V7812, ATOL 2325)

DAYS: 8 DEPARTS: Various dates



Stockholm and Copenhagen

From
£909

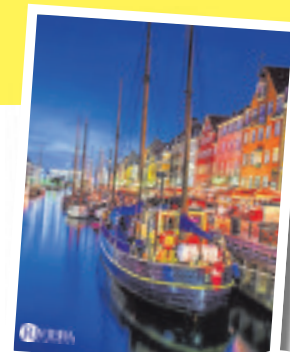
Quaint, historic capitals, pristine streets, wide-open spaces and home of the Vikings - discover all this and more.

Both cities have played host to royalty for hundreds of years, and their palaces and parks are set against lakes, canals and natural harbours.

- ✓ Return flights
- ✓ Five nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- ✓ Sightseeing tours of Stockholm and Copenhagen
- ✓ Tour of Sweden's Royal Palace
- ✓ High speed train from Stockholm to Copenhagen
- ✓ Visit to Roskilde including the Viking Museum and Cathedral
- ✓ Visit to Fredericksborg Slot
- ✓ Services of a tour manager
- ✓ Single rooms subject to availability (supplement applies)

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

DAYS: 6 DEPARTS: Selected dates June to September 2016



Prices are per person (unless otherwise stated). Please read brochures/web pages for full description plus terms and conditions. Dates subject to availability. Coach pick up points offered: Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton (with the exception of holidays by air, Eurostar and certain cruises). Please note the Star Reader Travel department is unable to take bookings.

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OLDBURY, Titford Road £895 pcm+Fees
A very well presented, spacious semi detached period property perfect for a large family refurbished to a high standard. Briefly comprising 2 reception rooms, good size kitchen, utility, downstairs w.c. & shower room, 5 good size bedrooms, study area / dressing area, first floor shower & family bathroom, garage and off road parking for 3 cars. EPC: E



WITHYMOOR, Aldeford Drive £725 pcm+Fees
Well presented semi detached house situated on the popular estate. Occupying a quiet cul de sac location. Featuring an attractive lounge with breakfast kitchen to the rear. To the 1st floor there are 3 bedrooms and a family bathroom, whilst to the outside there are gardens to front and rear. In addition, there is a garage and drive, and the property benefits from gas fired central heating and double glazing. Not to be missed! EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Haden Hill Road £895 pcm+Fees
Recently refurbished to a very high standard this 3 bedroom detached house close to Halesowen Town Centre features a lovely reception room, modern fitted kitchen with oven/hob, dining room with patio doors leading to a private rear garden. Upstairs there are 2 double bedrooms & 1 single, modern fitted family bathroom with shower. Driveway for 2 cars. EPC: D



NEW
WOLVERHAMPTON, Chelston Drive £650 pcm+Fees
A 3 bedroom detached home located in a quiet cul de sac location and benefits gas central heating and double glazing. The accommodation briefly comprises a reception hall, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, conservatory, 3 bedrooms, garage and paved driveway. EPC: TBC



NEW
BIRMINGHAM, St Pauls Square £650 pcm+Fees
A part furnished 2nd floor studio apartment. The apartment is ready for immediate occupation has accommodation (accessed via secure concierge entrance) to comprise a hallway, fitted bathroom suite with shower over, bedroom area with fitted wardrobes, open plan kitchen/lounge area with fitted appliances, including fridge, oven, hob and washing machine. EPC: TBC



DUDLEY, Ivanhoe Street £650 pcm+Fees
Hicks Hadley are delighted to market this well presented terraced 3 bedroom property. Featuring on the lower level, a modern kitchen/diner and reception room, ground level has 2 reception rooms and main entrance hall, 2 bedrooms and family bathroom on the 1st floor and master bedroom (loft conversion) on the top floor. The property also benefits from rear garden and parking to the rear. This property must be viewed to fully appreciate EPC: E



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Waterfall Lane £625 pcm+Fees
Located within a short distance of Old Hill Train Station, a short drive from Black Heath and Cradley Heath, is this modern town house, featuring 3 bedrooms, 2 spacious lounges, house bathroom with shower, downstairs wc, small enclosed garden, driveway for 1 car and also benefits from an integrated garage. EPC: TBC



LET ON FIRST VIEWING
ROWLEY REGIS, Allsops Close £595 pcm+Fees
A very well presented unfurnished modern 2 bedroom home in a popular residential location. Accommodation comprises of lounge with patio doors leading to conservatory, kitchen, 2 bedrooms and family bathroom, gas central heating, private rear garden, allocated parking for 1 car. EPC: C



LET ON FIRST VIEWING
HALESOWEN, The Forge £595 pcm+Fees
A modern 2 bedroom semi detached property situated in a quiet cul de sac and within walking distance to Cradley Heath Train Station, bus links and shops. Featuring a great living room, conservatory, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, private rear garden, driveway, gas central heating. EPC: TBC



LET
HALESOWEN, Hilltop Ave £595 pcm+Fees
A lovely end terraced property recently fully refurbished, close to Halesowen Town Centre featuring large reception room with dining area, brand new fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom suite with shower, large low maintenance paved rear garden, driveway for 2 cars. EPC: D



LET ON FIRST VIEWING
HALESOWEN, Howley Grange Road £595 pcm+Fees
An extended unfurnished semi detached family home in popular location for Howley Grange Primary School. Benefiting from gas central heating, double glazing, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, conservatory, 2 double bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens. EPC: D



LET ON FIRST VIEWING
HALESOWEN, Barnswood Close £575 pcm+Fees
A well presented newly painted mid terraced property comprising hallway with stairs to first floor, fitted kitchen, large lounge with patio doors to the rear garden, double glazing, gas central heating, double bedroom with fitted wardrobes and a further smaller double, white bathroom suite with shower over bath and tiled floor off road parking at the front of the property. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Talbot Street £550 pcm+Fees
●●● 1ST MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE ●●● A fabulous newly renovated mid-terrace house with complete re-wire, new alarm system, new roof, new K rated Boon boiler, gas central heating, new carpets & decorated throughout, comprising 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs bathroom with shower, 3 bedrooms, rear garden, on road parking a short distance from local shops, Cradley Train Station and the number 9 bus route. EPC: E



LET
HALESOWEN, Hagley Road (Rosegardens) £525 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished 1st floor coach house apartment within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre and on a major bus route. Featuring gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, parking space, and a lovely communal garden. An internal inspection is highly recommended. EPC: TBC



NEW PRICE
ROWLEY REGIS, Brickhouse Road £500 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished 2 double bedroom house on Brickhouse Road comprising of: Large through lounge with new laminated floor, hallway, kitchen with appliances, 2 double bedrooms both with fitted wardrobes, white bathroom with shower, double glazed and centrally heated, rear garden, driveway to front of property. EPC: TBC



DUDLEY, Southgate Way £499 pcm+Fees
A stunning and spacious well presented furnished to suit 1st floor apartment featuring 2 bedrooms, electric storage heating, double glazing, open plan living room with fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: C



NEW
SEDGLEY, Tudor Vale £495 pcm+Fees
Located in this ever popular cul-de-sac is this end mews house, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted dining kitchen, downstairs WC, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, driveway parking, unfurnished. EPC: C



NEW
TIVDALE, Regent Close £450 pcm+Fees
A large 2 bedroom 1st floor flat in a quiet cul de sac located close to Dudley town centre. There is a very spacious lounge, 2 double bedrooms with storage, kitchen and bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazed. Parking available to front of property. EPC: TBC



NEW
OLDBURY, Causeway Green Road £450 pcm+Fees
A lovely bright, large and spacious. A split level apartment, with a large lounge, open plan living room with fitted kitchen, double glazing, open plan living room with fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, parking to rear, with the added bonus of a porch. Unfurnished. EPC: D



LET
CRADLEY HEATH, Luanne Close £425 pcm+Fees
This lovely unfurnished ground floor apartment, with views over the canal and on a popular development. Featuring 1 bedroom, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with small fridge and washing machine, gas central heating, bathroom with shower, allocated parking, communal garden. EPC: C



LET ON FIRST VIEWING
CRADLEY HEATH, Victoria Gardens £395 pcm+Fees
A modern top floor apartment, in the centre of Old Hill with local bus stop outside and Old Hill train station close by. This apartment comprises of 1 double bedroom, electric storage heating, double glazing, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, allocated parking, unfurnished. EPC: C

PROPERTY



Detached house has no chain and reduced price

A DETACHED house just off Birmingham New Road in Harvington Road, Coseley, is ideally positioned for commuting.

It is for sale through Wakeman at a reduced price of £159,950 with no chain.

With gas central heating and double glazing, the redecorated accommodation includes an entrance hall, a lounge with fireplace, a kitchen with a gas cooker and store/pantry, an extended dining room with gas fire, a vestibule/utility with a separate WC. Two of the three bedrooms have free-standing wardrobes. The bathroom includes a bath with a shower over and shower screen.

There is a garage, driveway and gardens.

Contact Wakeman on 01902 885894 or visit www.wakeman-online.com website.



Loft conversion ideal for growing family



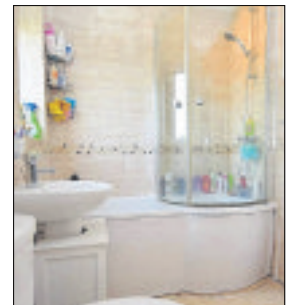
THIS four-bedroom semi in Beach Avenue, Woodcross, Bilston, has undergone improvements.

It has a loft conversion making it ideally suited for a growing family and is for sale through DB Roberts & Partners at £145,000.

The property has an enclosed, well-established garden to rear. There is a lounge, fitted kitchen/diner, inner lobby area and utility room. On the first floor are three generously-sized bedrooms and fitted family bathroom with 'P' shaped bath, whilst the loft conversion includes useful storage in the eaves and a dressing area.

There is central heating with a recently fitted boiler and double glazing.

Contact DB Roberts & Partners on 01902 427257 or visit www.dbroberts.co.uk website.



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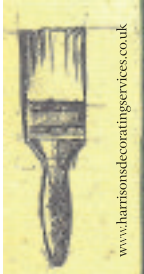
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2

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FIAT PUNTO 1.2, 5dr, 2008, white, MoT/217, 36,000 miles, very good condition but slight dent on door, £2,250 ono. 07759 422164.

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MAZDA MX5 SPORT 51 plate, good condition, MoT, many extras, 86,000 miles, genuine reason for sale. £2,500 including private plate. 01902 789006 / 07729 793934.

PEUGEOT 107 1 litre Urban Lite, 2011, 35,300 miles, yellow, 1 lady owner, fish, fab condition. £20 tax, economical. £2,950 ono. 07449 811716

PEUGEOT 107 2006, 1.0, 5-door, silver, 42,000 miles, full MoT, PAS, EW, RCL, good condition. £1,575 ono. 07817 029177.

PEUGEOT 307, 2006, excellent condition, fish, long MoT, £2,200 ono. 01384 373999 or 07527 592477.

RENAULT MODUS 1.6 16v Dynamique, silver, 5 door, 55 plate, petrol, automatic, low mileage, £1,600 ono. 07804 470112.

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TOYOTA PRIUS T4 auto, 5dr hatch, 2008, hybrid electric, 20k only silver, sale due to breavement, full MoT, £7,000. 07876 473822.

TOYOTA RAV4 3dr, 54 reg, black with grey interior, service history, £2,695. 01562 710298

VAUXHALL ASTRA 2006, 98,700 miles, black, abs, EW, A/C, MoT, central locking, alloys, Bluetooth. £1,599 ono 07584 012512

VW BEETLE, 2013, 2.0 D, 7 speed auto gearbox, electric sunroof, 1,400 miles only, alloy wheels, £12,500 ono. 01922 683710.

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BMW 325TI SPORT 52 plate, MoT April, sold as seen. Offers around £700. 07814 456851.

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CITROEN BERLINGO 1.9 Diesel, 52 reg, white, MoT July, side door, daily use. £495 ono. 0736 1669911.

CITROEN C3 1360cc, petrol, 2003, good condition inside and out, owner, 62,000 miles, 11 months MoT, £950. 07578 757592.

CITROEN C3, 2005, very good condition, MoT until 2017, 55,530 miles, £875. Contact Alois for viewing 07585 712077.

CITROEN PICASSO, 52 plate, 02 reg, MoT'd till March 2017, Good condition. £750. c.n.o. 01902 895796

CITROEN SAXO 1.1 Desire, 2001, MoT Feb 2017, excellent condition, £350. 07984 320946.

MITSUBISHI PININ 4X4 2.0 Elegance, 2001, very good condition, MoT, history. £750ono or exchange for mini project. 01562 632756.

PEUGEOT 206 Convertible, 03, FSH, MoT, leather interior, blue, superb condition. £875. 01364 440258. 07935 337167.

RENAULT CLIO Expression, 1.1, 5dr, 53 reg, only 48k, service history, MoT, lady owner, excellent condition, only 3955. 07894 141652.

RENAULT MODUS 1.4 petrol, 55 plate, fish, ew, full MoT, 83,000 on clock, fantastic condition, £1,295 ono. 01902 470560.

RENAULT SCENIC 1.6, 2007, Red, 54,000 miles, 11 months MoT, very good condition, half leather seats. £1,500 ono. 07825 267541.

RENAULT SCENIC Grand, red, 05 reg, 59,120 miles, new clutch fitted, good condition. £1,200. 07748 070012.

ROVER 75 1.8, 51 reg, MoT, 85,000 miles, A1 condition. £760. Telephone 01902 782601.

ROVER ZS SALOON 1.8, (52). Blue, 88k miles, 5 months MoT. Very good condition. £675 ono. May part ex. 01902 530123 / 07747 740971.

SKODA FABIA 02, 1.4, 67,000 miles, yellow, MoT till Feb 2017, recent service history, £275 ono. 07401 643571.

SKODA OCTAVIA 1.6 2003, 117,000 miles, grey, abs, air bag, MoT to Sept 2016, central locking, pas, alloys, stereo. Recent timing belt and water pump. £525 07789 172467.

TOYOTA AVENTIS T3-X 2005, 184k miles, olive green, FSH, MoT, diesel, alloys, CD, cambelt at 164k, very good condition £895 ono. 07405 196046.

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.0, 56 plate, 67k, 12 months MoT, excellent condition. £1,395. o.n.o. 07939 46221

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 Design, 04, 3dr, private plate, silver, history, MoT, good condition, £695. 07599 220780.

VAUXHALL VECTRA LS, 1796cc, 5dr, hatchback, 2003, silver, 62,000 miles, petrol, history, 2 owners, £850. 07901 617734.

VW GOLF Estate 1.9 SDI, 2002, MoT Feb 2017, good condition, drives excellent, high mileage, £850. 01902 847906.

classic cars

MG B GT, 1968 Yellow, 38,000 genuine miles, part restoration by last owners. Valued @ £7,000. Sell for £6,750 ono. For more information call 07801 062339.

WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private cash buyer. Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

commercial vehicles

FORD TRANSIT CONNECT, 07 reg, 1 owner from new, fish, low mileage, red, £1,695 ono. Telephone 07939 483221.

VAUXHALL MOVANO Van, 2000, owned for 10 years, MoT, very clean, loads of new parts fitted. £1,450 ono. 07787 955532.

WANTED Medium sized pick up or large van. 07754 121452.

driving tuition

Home's 10 Hours £299 Five Hours £201 2 Hours £201 All Areas Covered AD/POI REQUIRED. Gift vouchers available for £10 07432 458100 / 01562 870050 01384 234554 / 0121 564099 01902 580065 www.homesdrivingschool.co.uk

motorbikes

YAMAHA XJR 600 Diversion, 1998, MoT, Pannier boxes and top rack. £750. 01384 830877.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

MCB TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS Tel: 01902 408176 1000's of parts available at all times MONMORE RD, WV1 2TZ

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available 0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Evening 07813 184611 Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

alan reed cars Used cars wanted for cash Top prices paid. HP settled. Buyer could call.

01562 711083 / 07831 245313

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07803 549648, 01902 597035.

spares & accessories

accessories & services

REGISTRATION PLATE Number UHT 800. For sale. £450. Assignment fee already paid included in price. 01902 831158.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

general

CREMATED REMAINS GRAVE Bushbury Cemetery, old section, plot for 4 sets of ashes. £600. Contact 07730 598821

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION held a flag day on Saturday, April 2, 2016, raising £430.57. Expenses Nil. We thank the people of Halesowen for their generosity.

personal

ATTENTION LADIES 40-58. Please don't pass this advert by, read on and see I'm a genuine guy.

52, slim, attractive, GSOH, romantic too, hoping for reply from a lady like you. Box Number P20298, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

GENTLEMAN 5FT 5 74 years, wishes to meet lady 50-75 for friendship, possible relationship. Photo appreciated. (Returned). Box Number P20297, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

GENTLEMAN Sincere, well mannered, educated, loyal, polite, romantic, understanding, I drive, would like to meet single mother, 30-55, for holidays here and abroad and for long term relationship only, solvent, 8 mile radius of Wolverhampton. Genuine replies only. Box Number C20302, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

SEEKING FRIENDS S. Saunders, D. Woodfield, Youngster, P. Hinks. Remember Furrer. 1960's Bilston College of Further Education. Box Number C20299, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

sports clubs

DUDLEY SPORTS 6-A-SIDE SUMMER TOURNAMENT Saturday May 21, 2016 & Sunday, May 22, 2016. Saturday morning session, U'9s, U'12s, U'13s. Afternoon session U'10s, U'11s, U'15s Sunday 22, morning session U'7s, U'8s and U'14s, U'16s Afternoon session, U'11's/12 girls, U'13/14 girls, U'15/16 girls. Download application form www.dudleysportsfc.co.uk or ring Fred 07788 684258.

KEWFORD EAGLES NORTH Require experienced players as they move to a 7 a side, playing in the SDYFL - school year 4 from September. Contact Matt 07969 543834.

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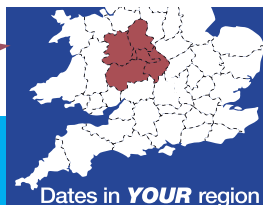
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Single Women

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ATTRACTIVE, slim woman looking for fun and excitement with guy 35-40 pls text. Text only Mailbox: 5419773**ABIGAIL**, 33yrs slim sophisticated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with a discreet experienced man, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box: 421339**TINA**, 43, young looking attractive single female looking for love, with similar lonely heart resorting to advertising in the hope of finding love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421613**EMILY**, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421275**MANDY**, 45, friendly outgoing airy female who loves wining/dining, looking for male to sweep me off my feet, take me out and make me feel special, reciprocation guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421503**ROSIE**, genuine well educated, sophisticated lady 29yrs WLTm fun loving chap, any age for chats, lunch, discreet meetings. Box: 421470 Text only**SALLY** 37 blonde, blue eyed, who loves life, music, getting my hair done, looking for similar flirty guy for enjoy TLC and life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421451**JAYNE**, bored housewife, 42yrs looking for someone to spice up her days with some fun and jokes. Box: 4155728 Text only**JESSICA** 39, attractive fit/healthy blonde female enjoys travel, music, the Arts, gym, the good things in life, seeking love, laughter, LTR with similar male, 40-55yrs. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421563**HI** I am Lorna 39yr old slim female, 5ft 5ins, many interests, loves music, seeking romantic male to enjoy special times together, hopefully leading to true love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421413**JAYNE**, 42, very pretty brunette, stylish, fun, loves the 60's, fine wine/restaurants, seeks professional gent for mutual life enhancement. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421311**JO** attractive 39's brunette who loves life, WLTm up for it male to enjoy nights in/out, weekends away, fun times and hopefully more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421259**REBECCA** tall slim elegant long legged romantic, sensual, professional, lots to offer, seeks similar male who also appreciates the finer things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421583**KATIE** 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box: 419673**CARING** honest female, WLTm genuine guy for LTR in Glos/Bristol area. Text only Mailbox: 4209465**JANE**, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**SUE**, 39, slim feminine brunette, caring, fun loving, independent, no lies, OHAC, loves cooking, WLTm willing male to get to know and spend quality nights. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421617**LUCY** first time advertiser, 32yrs, tall slim blonde airline worker, seeks discreet gent, any status for casual fling. Looks/age unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box: 420237**DONNA** 42yrs young separated female who is ready to start dating again, bubbly, attractive, blonde and raring to get going, come on don't keep me waiting! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421567**SOPHIA** young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all chats answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**SARA**, 39, home owner, likes animals, tattoos and texting, looking for friendship hopefully leading to more. Get in touch! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421455**KAREN**, 42yrs, attractive and broadminded, seeks no strings fun with chap any age, must be discreet. Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box: 407953

Customer support

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LOUISE 35, lovely meals out, WLTm tallish, considerate mature male who is not frightened to express themselves and enjoy life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421135**ANGELA**, 42, green eyed dark haired feminine lady who enjoys walking and keeping fit, seeking lonely kind gentleman for good times and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421115**MARGARET** 39, dark hair/eyed attractive petite divorcee, new to area and looking to start a new life, WLTm child friendly male, single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421129**MONICA** 35, very attractive, gorgeous curvy figure, WLTm nice male who wants to get to know a genuine black beauty to wine, dine, romance hopefully leading to more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421241**46YR** old Asian lady looking for friendship maybe with white male 50+ Text only to Mailbox: 5404865**TRISH**, 45, tall slim young/good looking GSOH, professional, solvent, OHAC, affectionate and loves TLC, WLTm male who also likes to be in a loving relationship, 39-50yrs. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421137

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MICHELLE 39yr old nurse, slim, petite, blonde, blue eyes, looking to enjoy life with similar romantic, caring guy. Single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420791**DEBS** lovely 40's female with no lies, GSOH, N/S, loves the simple things in life looking for similar soul mate to be happy together with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420729**JULIE**, 47, blonde brown eyes, size 12, varied interests, loves cuddling, kissing and showing affection, seeks similar energetic male friend for TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420357**LILY**, genuine lady looking for a genuine man. I like cosy nights in and am a smoker. Text only mailbox no: 5372466**ANNA**, 41, new to single life seeking caring professional male for no strings fun, attention come on don't keep me waiting! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421567**HONEST** sincere affectionate nurse, 48, OHAC, WLTm child friendly male/single dad for dates, chats, laughter and more. Any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421111**SUSANNAH**, 49, curvy female, romantic, warm and cuddly, seeks similar kind male for a loving relationship with lots of cuddles and kisses. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417341**SUE**, 46, confident professional, sports/active, seeking sensitive interesting guy for intimate evenings in with great food and conversations. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420701**SAMANTHA** pretty brunette, very busty 36, intelligent, independent with a real lust for life, seeks big-hearted stocky male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420599**JANE**, 47, voluptuous female, long hair, brown eyes, generous curves, would love to spend cosy nights in with that special male. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417985**REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.****REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. 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Even Fiat must have been surprised by the success of its retro-styled 500 nearly a decade ago.

Cute, stylish and economical, the city car was a faithful but modern interpretation of the cheap and cheerful little model which was a mainstay of the Italian motor industry in the 50s, 60s and 70s, much as the Mini was here.

It was, however, significantly bigger: but perhaps not big enough to satisfy all would-be buyers, especially those with growing families. And so a larger, compact MPV (the 500L) was born and more recently its crossover, or compact SUV sibling the 500X.

Both are instantly recognisable members of the family, with the 500 'face' but the X is arguably the prettier, more stylish version, and was targeted at the fastest growing sector of the new car market.

Buyers seem to just love SUVs: there are lots of reasons from the high 'command' driving position, ease of access and image (even though the majority sold don't have a traditional SUV's all wheel drive system).

The 500X rivals many family-sized hatchbacks, with room for five adults, with plenty of headroom, and a decent 351 litres of boot space with easily foldable rear seats for a much larger, flat cargo area when the need arises. But is also has lots of style: it isn't only the car's face which reminds you of its little city car sibling. It's interior is perhaps rather more mature (as befits that 'growing family' buyer, but with features such as retro-look door handles, a body-coloured decor strip (bright alloy on top models) and a neatly integrated infotainment screen with a wide range of functions.

The test car came in 'Lounge' trim, a front wheel drive version powered by a second generation multijet 1.6 litre turbo diesel which, at £20,935, is just about halfway up the 500X range.

The flagship model is the 'Cross' spec with all wheel drive, automatic transmission and a 2.0 litre diesel engine at a touch under £26,000.

The 1.6 turbo diesel, combined with a six-speed manual gearbox, isn't available with all wheel drive but it's still likely to be one of the most popular engine choices for both business and private buyers. The reason is it's blend of performance (0 to 62mph in 10.5 seconds), economy (60mpg) and low CO2 emissions (109g/km) which translates into low road tax and benefit in kind costs.

It has plenty of torque from low revs for brisk, smooth progress and is quite, too – there's no audible clue to the fact it's an oil-burner under the bonnet.

Responses

You can adjust the driving mode with a rotary switch between the seats (standard, sport and winter), which acts on steering and throttle response. Sport mode does make the car feel instantly more lively, more of a 'driver's car' but it's perfectly adequate in standard mode for most purposes.

Winter mode speaks for it out, softening up responses for tackling slippery conditions and naturally on a modern car you have a full range of electronic wizardry including traction and stability systems.

While the 500X is taller than most hatchback rivals, the suspension is a good combination – supple enough to soak up the bumps yet firm enough to ensure accurate turn-in through the twisty bits without any appreciable body roll. It's a comfortable, grown up experience.

Many buyers will be happy with the front wheel drive version, as with many of the 500X's compact SUV rivals. The Fiat's automatic system is a competent affair, and comes on models with the range's two most powerful engines, the 140bhp petrol and the 170bhp (two litre) diesel.

The 'Lounge' test car came with front, side and curtain airbags, disc brakes all round, 18-inch alloys, tinted windows, rear parking sensors, electric wing mirrors remote controls on the steering wheel and a cruise control with speed limiter.

Atop the centre of the dash is the touch screen which monitors and controls a range of functions, including various car system settings and a comprehensive trip computer as well as the audio, Bluetooth and connectivity systems.

The test car was fitted with the optional £550 'Nav Pack', which includes a slightly larger (6.5 inch) screen. Press fleet vehicles tend to be kitted out to showcase what's available to buyers, so other extras included leather seats (£900), a sunroof (£950), heated front seats (£175), and the 'winter pack' (heated steering wheel and windscreen) at £150.

The 500X faces some tough competition as more and more manufacturers chase sales in the compact SUV sector. But it has space, a range of engines which allow you to choose economy or performance (and a fair balance of both in the 1.6 diesel), there are two and four wheel drive options and it's competitively priced.

And, for many, there's no substitute for that Italian styling: it's pretty and practical, a car which appeals to both the heart and the head.

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No hiding place in this latest Bentley

By Ian Donaldson

THERE are two possible reactions to a Bentley that sounds like a purring lion heard through a rock group's sound system – and comes in retina-bruising yellow.

You'll either be given two fingers at the traffic lights – or instructions to 'park it over there, sir, because it's such a lovely car and we don't want it being scratched.'

Well, in more than 500 miles with the banana coloured beast there was not a single rude gesture, just lots of well mannered stares. If you value your privacy, don't buy a Bentley that looks as if its bodywork is illuminated from the inside.

The teenage lad liked it so much he captured the car on his mobile phone as it rumbled by in traffic; someone old enough to be his grannie correctly identified the car from fifty paces in the car park when her husband wondered out loud what it was.

The considerate parking came at a busy historic home open day when the only vacant spaces were reserved for disabled drivers.

The Bentley was guided into a place because the man in charge knew there'd still be lots of room for people who properly qualified (there was).

But, you are asking; what is the car like? You know ... how does it drive, how roomy is it, how much petrol does it drink? The sort of practical, everyday concerns we ordinary mortals have about our wheels.

Well, a Bentley owner has other things on his mind. If you're paying £164,800 for a car (read on for the extras!) you won't have price high on the list of must-haves.

It must look as though craftsmen went without sleep to make your car perfect and it must let the world know (discreetly in black, less so in Monaco Yellow) you're a person of substance. It does.

It must also make you and your passengers feel utterly special every time they slip into its exquisitely leathered interior.

How could they not when confronted with seats covered in hide that might otherwise make £1,000 handbags or faced with a piano black dashboard sanded and lacquered up to 18 times before being passed as Bentley quality.

More practical points come much further down the list for consideration. For starters, although the Continental Convertible is a very big car (about as long as a Range Rover Sport and even heavier) it has room in the rear for a couple of pre-teens, at best.

That vast roof, which can be folded on the move at up to 20mph has got to be stored somewhere when folded, which also means the boot is smaller than you'd expect. Big enough, though, for an expensive suitcase or two, which is rather more to the point of a car like this.

Keen drivers, once they've got used to the size and found a sweeping road or two will find themselves astonished at the way the car reacts to a firm prod of the elegantly alloyed throttle pedal.

Accompanied by the sound of close artillery fire from the optional sports exhaust (£1,935) it heads for the horizon as though warp drive had been engaged.

Here is a car that sits as so comfortably at 80mph that one eye needs to watch the big digital speedometer to keep points off the licence – even on a trip to Waitrose.

The optional ceramic brakes (£11,990 - yes, really) will haul you down from the car's 191mph top speed time and time again, although goodness knows where you'll be at the time. A 22mpg thirst on test means fewer trips to the pumps than you might imagine.

The 'S' in the test car's title means there is firmer air suspension, sharper steering and some subtle styling clues that you've gone for the sportier version. Add the yellow paint and sports exhaust and nobody will need convincing.

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Great breadth of ability

By John Griffiths

In a world car market where the compact SUV is the fastest growing, and most competitive, it's good to see a manufacturer blazing its own trail.

Jeep's new Renegade certainly does that: its chunky, purposeful looks defy the convention for the 'hatchback on steroids' appearance of many of its crossover rivals.

It's instantly identifiable as a Jeep, not least because of the trademark seven-slot grille, and demonstrates pride and confidence of the brand's 75-year heritage of making sports utility vehicles.

But at the same time it represents the company's future: it's the first Jeep to be built outside the US (in Italy) and the first product resulting from a sharing of technology with its new partner Fiat.

The Renegade range does, of course, include two wheel drive versions with economical engines and low CO2 emissions – a must for this market – with prices from £17,295 but you wouldn't expect Jeep to produce a new model (it's first for a decade) without at least one version which was the real deal, a car with serious off-road ability.

This is the Trailhawk, the top of the range Trailhawk with a seemingly expensive price tag of £28,595.

But this is the chief Renegade, the flagship model which is not only the best equipped in terms of comfort and technology, it's also the most powerful and ready for tackling the most extreme terrain. It has skid plates underneath to protect the car's mechanicals, plus a set of low range gears,

four wheel drive lock, multi-mode terrain response and hill descent control.

The overall design is more purposeful than pretty, with short overhangs front and rear and a high bonnet line which allows the driver to easily see the car's corners as you thread your way through boulders and trees (and car parks for that matter).

The Renegade proudly bears the red 'Trail Rated' badge which means it has passed a series of gruelling off-road tests. Yet this isn't the rough, semi-agricultural off-roader of yesteryear. In fact, its creature comforts and refinement on the road mean that, apart from the high seating position, you'd be hard put to distinguish the on-road experience from a decent hatchback or saloon.

It has longer travel, beefy suspension needed for tackling the rough stuff but on the road the ride is only slightly on the firm side, and far from uncomfortable. It is also almost surprisingly agile on twisty b-roads, with excellent body control and none of the rock 'n' roll of many traditional SUVs.

The nine (yes NINE) speed automatic gearbox ensures plenty of performance (under nine seconds for the 0 to 62mph sprint) with low revs and noise, while also aiding economy. You can change gear manually, too, if you want a sportier drive.

The 2.0 litre turbo diesel, the most powerful in the range with 170bhp, produces its maximum pulling power from just 1,750rpm and, in official laboratory tests was capable of averaging 47.9mpg. The test car returned just on 40mpg, which since this involved a high proportion of urban driving, was acceptable for a full-blown 4x4.

This equates to a CO2 rating of 155g/km. For those looking for something cheaper to run, there are a range of other engine options – the 120bhp, 1.6 multijet diesel for



.....
Its chunky, purposeful looks defy the convention for the 'hatchback on steroids' appearance of many of its rivals
.....

example, with a six-speed manual gearbox is nearly £10,000 cheaper to buy, and uses less fuel, with a 115g/km CO2 rating reducing your tax liability too.

The car echoes the luxurious feel of its larger Jeep relatives, with leather upholstery (front are heated and electrically adjustable), dual-zone climate control and central control screen for navigation, audio and vehicle settings. The instruments are clear, and like the rest of the cabin, have an upmarket appearance. The tall cabin has room for five adults, and 351 litres of cargo space with the rear seats in place.

The test car had a panoramic sunroof

with sun shield, which are independently, electrically retractable, which added extra light and more luxury as a £1,100 option.

This top of the range Trailhawk will probably be something of a niche product – a great many buyers in the compact SUV market will no doubt opt for the cheaper, smaller engined two wheel drive versions. But there will be those who will want to take the rough with the smooth, a car which can go where many of its rivals (including some full size SUVs) can't and is equally at home in the mountains or the city centre. There just aren't too many vehicles about with this breadth of ability.

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In 2013 when they were fundraising for the new pavilion – Stephen Taft, Tony Banks and Daniel Kinsey



Outside the new pavilion, members of Springhill Cricket Club ready for the new season

Cricketers ready to spring into action

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Joe Edwards

“At some point in the summer, we will be hosting our grand opening for the building, which we see effectively as the relaunch of the club.”

Recently the club held their pre-season social event with a celebratory barbecue, for those who have helped out at the ground. “Gavin Williamson has been a massive supporter of our club. He has really helped along the way.”

They have a new mobile cage to replace the old static nets which took a battering over the winter.

Promotion

Springhill’s first XI remain in the Staffs Clubs Division Two this season. The seconds finished third in Division Four last term, behind winners Pelsall and Burntwood St Matthew’s.

The third XI were 13th in Division Five, but they did enter the league as a new team.

Kinsey is particularly hoping the second XI gain promotion this term and added: “This year is a bit of a consolidating year for us. Our main aim, though, is for our second team to go up a division.

“Our first team are a strong side so we expect them to possibly challenge at the top again in the second division.

“We want our second team, who are in the fourth division, to really push for promotion.

“The thirds are still a new side, last season was their first as a team, so hopefully they can hold their own too.”

SPRINGHILL Cricket Club are in high spirits as the new season gets under way. The club, in Lower Penn, held its first AGM in its new pavilion recently and now all three of their teams are geared up for the new campaign in the Staffordshire Cricket Club Championship.

Springhill CC was set up in 1949 and they have been based at their present site since 1950. They had been without a clubhouse for more than a decade, though, as their old wooden pavilion was demolished in 2005 after an arson attack.

Three years ago, the club was awarded £50,000 of National Lottery funding to develop its new clubhouse and back in September, they secured a £50,000 grant from Biffa Award to complete the second phase of the development.

Backing

Sport England were among others to provide financial backing and the building, which cost an approximate total of £180,000, is now in place, with just a few finishing touches to put to it.

Club secretary Dan Kinsey is relieved to now have a ‘solid’ facility and said: “It is a brand new clubhouse, a facility that wasn’t there at all previously. Our old wooden pavilion was burnt down 11 years ago, gutted in an arson attack, and it almost put the club to an end.

“The facility is solid, it is brand new. There are two changing rooms, which will have shower facilities. There are new toilet facilities, a big community room with a kitchen, and there will be a bar area too. We are putting the finishing touches to it now and, at some point in the summer, we will be hosting our grand opening for the building, which we see effectively as the relaunch of the club.”

The club is being supported by South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson and NatWest Bank as they prepare the playing surface and construct new training nets for the forthcoming season. Volunteers from NatWest were due to help club members to fit the new mobile nets.



Preparing for the new season, secretary Dan Kinsey with vice chairman Kevin Jones

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Ex-England chief sees Stour victory

WITH ex-England head coach Stuart Lancaster in the crowd, Stourbridge produced one of their best performances of the season to secure a hard-fought bonus point win at Otley, 19-27.

The hosts struck first with a try in the corner but Chris Scott reduced the deficit with a penalty when Otley were penalised by referee Claire Hodnett for not releasing in the tackle.

Up to then Stour had spent most of their time defending but the tide turned with a superb daylight-robbery interception by winger Josh Trinhnam who hared down 60 metres to score under the posts for a half time lead.

Stour stormed into the second half when after two minutes centre Joe Heatley broke and was in position to receive the scoring pass a couple of phases later. The first-phase line out ball was moved left where winger Ash Elvers came across to take an inside pass and blast through a gap and score.

Stour laid siege to the Otley line with a series of scrums. Centre James Otutaha bagged the bonus-point try after a tap and run by scrum half Toby Handley. Otley hit back with a couple of well-taken late tries.

With the Dudley Kingswinford first XV home match at Silhillians postponed, **DK Development XV** took centre stage and their biggest crowd of the season saw them secured the Midlands Reserve Division 2 title by the impressive margin of 48-3 over Sutton Coldfield.

Old Halesonians came back from a disappointing couple of weeks to record a 13-22 victory at Newport, despite ongoing injury absences.

After falling 8-0 behind and missing a penalty, Old Hales started the fightback with tries from Owen Jones and Tom Jordan.

Old Hales had the benefit of a half time chat by player-coach Ben Hughes, who led from the front with some quality line out ball. Centre Steve Leach got a deserved try, converted by Oli Rayner. Another line out won by Hughes saw skipper Rich Taylor cross for the bonus point try.

Rain leaves Hales rusty

HALESOWEN Cricket Club chairman Richard Evans says there is a serious danger the club will have to go straight into competitive action after rain washed out last weekend's scheduled pre-season games.

It means the best they can hope for is a T20 friendly with Himley on Saturday before facing Birmingham League Premier Division side Walsall at Seth Somers Park on Sunday in the National T20 competition.

Himley will be led on Saturday by former Warwickshire and Leicestershire star Ben Smith, but club officials admit they are in need of some dry weather to give the game any chance.

But Evans takes some comfort from the fact that most other clubs throughout the region have been through the same problems.

Top fight billing for home turf duo

DUDLEY'S top prospects Ryan Aston and Tommy Ghent will share top billing for the first time in over four years – and on home turf.

The two are the headline acts for promoter Paul 'PJ' Rowson's 'Resurgence' show at Dudley Town Hall on May 21.

Southpaw Aston, 25, known as 'The Tank', will feature over six rounds, looking to rebuild after defeat to Ahmet Patterson for the IBF International light middleweight title in January.

Ghent, of Coseley, returns in the chief support bout of six four-rounders, after nearly three years out with his first paid fight in the town. 'Glad-iator' Ghent, 23, and Aston were both talented

Boxing

amateurs out of Priory Park Boxing Club, where popular Netherton middleweight Les 'Minefield' Byfield and supper middle Josh 'The Jackal' Miller – both also on the Town Hall card – train.

Rugged Rowley Regis middleweight Tyler Denny, from Shaun Cooper's gym in Brierley Hill, is also on the bill, alongside flamboyant flyweight Matt Windle, from Warley.

Tickets are £40, £50 or £70. Call the promoter on 07976 283 157.

A week earlier, Ricky Hatton's prospects will

take centre stage when professional boxing returns to Walsall FC's Stadium Suite.

The former two-weight world champion has teamed up with Errol Johnson's Black Country Boxing to put on the May-hem show, co-headlined by Sam Evans of Wednesbury and heavyweight Nathan Gorman.

Ex-British lightweight champ Martin Gethin and ex-English title challenger Steven Pearce, from Stourbridge, both appear on the under-card. Kieron McLaren and Chad former world kickboxing champion Chad Sugden complete the line-up.

Standard passes are £30 with VIPs, at £60. Call 01922 651414, extension 416.

Yeltz at the double to beat tally

FIRST-HALF goals from Luke Male and Kaiman Anderson helped **Halesowen Town** complete a double against rock-bottom Ramsbottom. The 2-0 win on the road also kept the Yeltz on track to beat last season's points tally.

Male notched his first goal of the season after just 12 minutes of this Evo-Stik Northern Premier clash by converting the rebound from Anderson's shot. Anderson made it two before half time.

Stourbridge eased to a 3-1 victory at Mickleover Sports but followed up with a disappointing 1-1 draw at Matlock on Tuesday.

On Saturday a third successive league victory looked assured for Gary Hackett's side once they raced into a 3-0 lead during eight dramatic first-half minutes. While Stour were busy dismantling their Derbyshire hosts, rivals Workington and Ashton United both dropped points to allow the Glassboys to climb to fourth in the Evo-Stik Northern Premier.

Justin Richards fired a deflected shot past Mickleover 'keeper Ross Durrant on 22 minutes. The forward then latched on to Karl Hawley's flick-on to drill a second past Durrant just over a minute later. Worse was to follow for the shell-shocked hosts on the half-hour mark. Dan Scarr's header was blocked by Durrant but Kristian Green tucked away the rebound. Glassboys struggled to regain their momentum and Sports scored on 60 minutes through Zeph Thomas.

On Tuesday Karl Hawley's 65th minute goal looked as though it had earned the win for the Glassboys, but Jack Suddall clipped the ball past Matt Gould two minutes into added time. Hackett made two changes from the team that won at Mickleover with skipper Stuart Pierpoint returning after injury in place of Joe Hull, and Tom Tonks slotting in for Chris Lait after he picked up a knock.

Hobbs tames the hills to finish third

THE Halesowen road race team are really starting to put some results together in the West Midlands Regional races.

Patrick Fotheringham was racing in Shrewsbury and showed good skills and strength to win the bunch sprint of the chasing pack to record a fine sixth place.

Bridgnorth was the venue for the Two Counties race, a challenging course of three hilly laps each of 16 with a long road climb to finish. Joe Hobbs from Halesowen was leading going into the last 200 yards but just got pipped but achieved an impressive third place. Oliver Dighton performed well in the pack to record a solid top 20 finish along with teammate Matthew Worrall.

★★★

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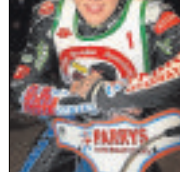
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MAX IS READY FOR BIG YEAR

CRADLEY skipper Max Clegg says this is the biggest year of his career.

Yorkshire lad Clegg, who turned 19 on Monday, is a firm favourite with Heathens supporters and is in his fourth season with the speedway club.



Skipper Max Clegg

He's one of the busiest riders in the sport as he also rides for Premier League Edinburgh and Elite League Wolverhampton.

"This is definitely the biggest year of my career so far and I'd love to have a major trophy to remember it by," he said. "The National League is going to help keep my confidence going with Cradley. This is my fourth season with them and they've helped me get to where I am today."

Confident

"I've made a decent start in my second season with Edinburgh – I love it up there and everyone made me feel so welcome. I did much better than I expected in the Premier League and now I want to prove myself as a solid middle-order rider."

"I feel a lot more confident at Elite League level this year too. When I did Elite League with Leicester in 2014, it was just too soon. I've got a lot more experience behind me this year and Wolverhampton is a club that really suits me. Riding at Monmore Green every week, track sharing with Cradley, is going to bring me on further."

Clegg leads the Heathens into action at Perry Barr on Wednesday when they face title favourites Birmingham. Heathens are next at Monmore when they face King's Lynn on April 25 – a meeting which will see the return of former favourite Nathan Greaves who won the league twice in three seasons with the club.

Heathens boss Will Pottinger praised his side after seeing them work hard for a 53-36 National League win over Rye House at Monmore on Tuesday.

Reanne pots 11th world title



Dudley's Reanne Evans with the world championship trophy

BLACK Country snooker ace Reanne Evans says the Ladies World Championship trophy is back where it belongs after her record-breaking 11th title.

Evans, from Dudley, beat 2015 champion Ng On Yee 6-4 in a back and forth final at the Northern Snooker Centre in Leeds.

She had 10 consecutive triumphs in the competition, from 2005 until 2014, before losing to the Hong Kong star in last year's semi-finals.

Evans said: "I'm over the moon, I'm glad to bring the title back. Now the trophy is back in England where it belongs."

Evans took the opening frame but On Yee led 3-2 at the interval.

At one point, it looked as if there could be a decider for the first time in the final of the competition since 1989, but Evans held her nerve and won three frames in a row to claim the crown.

"There was more pressure for On Yee this year, and I know how tough it is being the defending champion," Evans added.

"I struggled a little bit, I played a bit more of a fighting game, but I enjoyed it and obviously I'm glad I have come back with the trophy now."

"When it went four each, I thought, if I get in front, I don't fancy losing."

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